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CRITICAL JUNCTURE

A choice between progress and parochialism

Linguistic policies risk impairing India's ambitions

EDITORIAL » PAGE 12

SC ON ELECTION SANCTITY

'Recount of votes must not compromise ballot secrecy'

NEWS » PAGE 15

Kuki-Zo groups end shutdown of Manipur's National Highways

Kuki-Zo Council vows to continue opposition to Home Ministry's push for free movement on all roads in Manipur, it seeks separate administration; highways had been shut since the death of a protestor in Kangpokpi clashes with security forces

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) ended the community's shutdown of the National Highways passing through Manipur's hill districts on Thursday, following the burial of a protester who was killed in clashes on March 8. Movement of commercial vehicles resumed on National Highways no. 2 and 37 on Thursday evening.

However, the apex body of the Kuki-Zo community insisted that it would continue to oppose the government's decision to reopen all roads across the strife-hit State. "While the shutdown has been lifted, the free movement, as announced by the Home Ministry shall be vehemently opposed by the Kuki-Zo people, as it undermines and dilutes the justice process," the KZC said in a statement.

Kuki-Zo protester Lalgouthang Singsit was killed on March 8 when Kuki-Zo people in Kangpokpi district clashed with Central security forces over the enforcement of the decision to permit free movement of all vehicles on National Highways. Following his death, even the movement of commercial vehicles had been blocked by Kuki-Zo protesters for the past five days. A prolonged blockade would affect the supply of essential commodities to the Meitei-dominated valley districts.

The KZC emphasised its commitment to the cause of a separate administration of the State's hill districts, although visiting Central government officials reiterated, during a meeting with Kuki-Zo bodies in Churachandpur on March 11, that such a move is not agreeable.

Intelligence-based combing operations are being carried out in Manipur to recover all the looted weapons in the State. PTI

On Thursday, six Naga MLAs met Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla to apprise him of the hardships faced by their community due to the tense situation in Manipur, and to push for peace. They pledged support for any initiative to restore peace and normalcy.

"They assured [the Governor] that they will extend their cooperation in every step to ensure peace, and also exuded confidence that the State will definitely return to peace and normalcy under the leadership of the Governor," the Raj Bhavan said, in a statement.

The six MLAs were Awangbow Newmai, Khashim Vashum, Losii Dikho, Leishiyo Keishing, J. Kumo Sha, and Janghemlung Panmei.

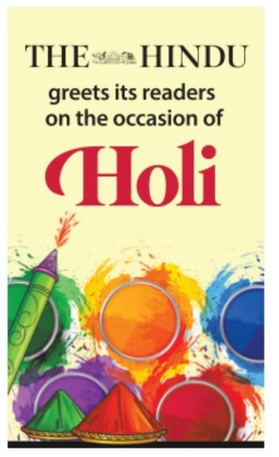
Representatives of the Churachandpur Meitei United Committee, led by its co-convenor Naba Ningthoujam, also met the Governor and submitted a memorandum requesting him to take steps for the welfare of internally displaced people from Churachandpur district who are now living in various relief camps.

Manipur was placed under President's Rule on February 13. More than 250 people have been killed since ethnic violence erupted in the State on May 3, 2023.

NEARBY

India's loan burden increased under Modi: CM

BENGALURU
Launching a counter-attack on the BJP that accused him of plunging the State into a debt trap, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday alleged in the Assembly that the country's loan burden had increased rapidly from ₹53.11 lakh crore when Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014-15 to ₹200 lakh crore now. » Page 8



METROPLUS » PAGE 7

UN accuses Israel of genocidal acts in Gaza

Reuters
GENEVA

Israel carried out "genocidal acts" against Palestinians by systematically destroying women's healthcare facilities during the conflict in Gaza, and used sexual violence as a war strategy, United Nations experts said in a report on Thursday.

"Israeli authorities have destroyed in part the reproductive capacity of the Palestinians in Gaza as a group, including by imposing measures intended to prevent births, one of the categories of genocidal acts in the Rome Statute and the Genocide Convention," said the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel.

Palestinian civil defence workers uncover corpses buried in the grounds of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City. AFP

Those actions, in addition to a surge in maternity deaths due to restricted access to medical supplies, amounted to the crime against humanity of extermination, the commission said.

The report accused Israel's security forces of using forced public stripping and sexual assault as part of their standard operating procedures to punish Palestinians following the Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel in October 2023.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the report's findings, saying they were "biased" and "antisemitic".

"Instead of focusing on the crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by the Hamas terrorist organization...the United Nations once again chooses to attack the state of Israel with false accusations," he said.

A previous report published by the Commission in June 2024 accused Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups of serious rights violations in the October 7, 2023 attack. In March last year, a team of UN experts said there were "reasonable grounds to believe" sexual violence, including rape, occurred at several locations during the militant group's assault.

Israel is party to the Genocide Convention and was ordered in January 2024 by the International Court of Justice to take action to prevent acts of genocide during the war against Hamas. South Africa has brought a genocide case against Israel's actions in Gaza at the International Court of Justice.

ED raids multiple locations linked to accused in gold smuggling case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has joined the probe into the gold smuggling case involving Kannada actor Ranya Rao, the stepdaughter of Director-General of Police K. Ramachandra Rao. It raided multiple locations linked to the accused in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Ranya was caught red-handed trying to smuggle 14.2 kg of gold at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on March 3 by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI). The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered an FIR on March 7. Now, the

Ranya Rao

ED has joined the probe, even as the State government has appointed Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta to probe misuse of the State police and the possible role of Mr. Rao.

On Thursday, the ED raided the residences of Ranya on Lavelle Road and Tarun Raj (grandson of the owner of a star hotel) on Kumara Park East Road – both arrested by the DRI in the case. The ED also raided the residence and premises linked to the owner of a gold mortgage and loan company at Koramangala over alleged transactions that have raised suspicions over the laundering of smuggled gold.

Meanwhile, the DRI searched the residence of Ranya's husband, Jatin Hukkeri, at Koramangala, sources said. The High Court of Karnataka recently directed the DRI not to take coercive action against him.

The DRI had recovered ₹2.67 crore in cash and jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore from the residence of Ranya, for which she failed to show source or receipts, the DRI said in her arrest memo.

Even as the actor has been claiming that she was only a mule who carried the gold consignment handed over to her by a person unknown to her, the ED is probing whether she was involved in the trade of the smuggled gold – buying in Dubai and selling it here in India. If so, the ED will also probe the source of the money and the mode of transaction from India to Dubai.

RELATED REPORTS
» PAGE 3

RoKo and India's renaissance

The two are among the finest white-ball players, have had careers running parallel to each other and yet have been different in terms of style and approach; they have been pivotal to the team's approach and led the way in embracing it; the predecessor often helps the successor in setting fields, a standout in their partnership

GETTY IMAGES

R. Kaushik

In Bingo parlance, 76 is referred to as trombone, which literally means 'large trumpet' - tromba is Italian for trumpet. 'Large trumpet' sits nicely on two of the greatest white-ball players. Not just of their generation, not just of their country, but of all time. Period.

Seventy-six is the new magic number in international white-ball cricket for India. That's the number of runs Virat Kohli scored in the final of the T20 World Cup in Bridgetown last June, which translated to a seven-run conquest of South Africa and the Player of the Final award. That same honour was conferred last Sunday on Rohit Sharma for making the same quantum of runs during India's four-wicket defeat of New Zealand in the final of the Champions Trophy. These two giants don't blow their own trumpet, but any which way you look at it, they truly are 'large trumpets'.

As part of the festivities after India whipped up a desert storm of their own making in Dubai, the current skipper and his illustrious predecessor plucked out stumps as souvenirs and broke into an impromptu *dandiya* jig, their joy infectious, their delight providing a glimpse of exactly how much this title triumph meant.

Neither individually, nor even put together, the T20 World Cup and the Champions Trophy titles will erase the bitter aftertaste of defeat to Australia in the final of the 50-over World Cup a year and a half back. But they most certainly will help soften the blow. That the two most senior and accomplished batters in the side took it upon themselves to deliver on the biggest stage of each tournament testifies to their inner steel and single-minded determination that neither a monumental volume of runs nor the passage of time has diluted one bit.

As they slumped into each other's arms after their stump dance, you could see that the affection was genuine, the regard for each other total and organic.

Rohit and Kohli may not be the best mates - they don't have to be, truth to tell - but they are good friends with a solid, strong, unshakable working relationship. There is tremendous respect for one another's ability and acumen. On their own, each is a titan. Together, they form a partnership for the ages even if, in recent times, they haven't had as many partnerships with the bat as they or their fans would have loved.

Senior statesmen

Rohit and Kohli weren't always on the same page a few years back, but all that has passed into history. Today, they are revelling in their roles as elder statespersons, inspiring with their words and deeds, passing on their wisdom and motivating their colleagues to play to their best potential, if not above themselves. It's a role that comes naturally to both, a role they relish and enjoy because they too were the recipients of such attention and focus from their senior and established colleagues when they first broke into the Indian team.

Rohit's international foray was some 14 months before Kohli's, when Rahul Dravid was the captain. At the time, in June 2007, few would have imagined that a decade and a half later, the stylist from Mumbai and the technician from Bengaluru would come together to form a splendid captain-coach alliance that would revolutionise India's approach to white-ball cricket. It was under this leadership group that India entertained and exhilarated on their way to the 50-over World Cup final and to the T20 World Cup crown. The thrilling brand of play the current T20 side is espousing is a mere extension of the seeds sowed under Rohit and Dravid. India's 20-over future is in exceptionally safe hands, of that there is little doubt.

Kohli joined Rohit on the world stage in August 2008 and made his Test debut two and a half years before the Mumbaikar, largely because Rohit picked up an ankle injury on the morning of his scheduled debut, in Nagpur against South Africa in February 2010. Their careers have therefore run parallel for the longest of times. Initially, in limited-overs internationals but since October 2019, in Test cricket too. Kohli's part in Rohit's rejuvenation as a Test batter has perhaps not received as much appreciation as it deserves, because it was in his elevation as opener that he found his true calling, just as he had in white-ball play when Mahendra Singh Dhoni thrust him up the order in January 2013.

Prolific pair

It was after Rohit started to open that he and Kohli, at No. 3, formed one of the most prolific pairs in One-Day Internationals. As on date, they are sixth on the list of most runs scored by a partnership, a list headed by the peerless duo of Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly. With 8827 runs, the two former captains are more than 2000 runs ahead of the next best pair (Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara), but even though Rohit and Kohli haven't batted a lot together in the last few years and even though they haven't pieced together as many runs as in the past, their average is comfortably the highest among the top 15 ODI alliances ever. Without being sucked into the comparison game, here's a recall. Tendulkar and Ganguly averaged 47.55, with 26 hundred stands and a further 29 scores between 50 and 99 in 176 innings, most of them opening the batting. Rohit and Kohli haven't batted in tandem as many times, but in 99 innings, they average 56.54, bolstered by 18 partnerships of more than 100 and 17 other half-century associations.

Rohit and Kohli cut contrasting figures at the batting crease. The former is a consummate six-hitter - he is only second by seven to Shahid Afridi's record of 351 - while the latter's game is based around the sharp singles and hard-run twos, though only Tendulkar (2016) has hit more fours than Kohli's 1325. One of the great non-secrets of a successful batting pair is the ability to understand each other's strengths but also allow for weaknesses. Rohit is a good runner between the wickets but not in the same league as Kohli, who has perfected the tip-and-run routine. Whenever the two have batted in tandem, Kohli has run at Rohit's pace without putting his partner under undue pressure, admirable for someone as industrious and energetic as the former captain.

Rohit's five centuries played a massive part in India's entry into the semifinal of the 2019 World Cup in England. No one batter had scored these many tons in a single edition but Rohit has maintained that those hundreds brought him no joy because it didn't help India progress beyond the semifinals. Indeed, as recently as last Sunday, he again reflected on that painful reality when he spoke of the satisfaction of contributing to winning causes. "I contributed a lot in the 2019 World Cup, but we didn't win. So, it wasn't fun," he said after his heroics in the final, with the Champions Trophy nestled to his right. "Even if you score 30 or 40 runs and win the match, you get more satisfaction and happiness. It was very important for me to do something and contribute and bring the team to a position where there is a little comfort for the rest of the batting order."

Kohli must have entertained similar emotions four years later, after India's shattering loss to the Aussies in the final. He had bossed the tournament all the way through, stacking up a staggering 765 runs at a stunning average of 95.62 and a terrific strike-rate of 90.31; the World Cup's leading scorer was also the Player of the Tournament, but it had a hollow ring to it because of what unravelled at the Narendra Modi Stadium that Sunday night. To have therefore made a telling contribution in the T20 World Cup final seven months later must have been especially fulfilling for someone who takes the greatest pride in weighing in for the unit.

Rohit and Kohli are at that stage of their careers where they are not fussed by milestones and individual achievements. The latter has more ODI hundreds (51) than anyone else and it is unlikely, maybe impossible even, that his mark will be erased. Rohit is third on the list of century-makers with 32, the modern-day giants sandwiching the titan of titans, Tendulkar (51). Kohli recently became the third batter, and the fastest, to 14,000 runs while Rohit brought up 11,000 runs, also at the Champions Trophy. Every run from here on is a bonus from an individual standpoint because it is for the common cause that their thoughts are aligned and in sync.

It speaks to Rohit's distinct lack of insecurity that he allows Kohli to move fields and emboldens his predecessor to charge up to him with ideas on field placements, bowling changes and the rest. It is to Kohli's great credit that, stripped of the ODI captaincy even though he had no intention of abdicating that throne towards the end of 2021, he is willing and able to help his successor out in whatever way possible. To be able to feed off the sagacity of these two virtuosos is a great place to be in for the other players, no slouches but certainly not anywhere near the Rohit-Kohli league.

Indian cricket must count itself fortunate to have the services of these two legends run concurrently for so long; they may not have many miles left in their tired but willing legs, so it is imperative that the others continue to want to learn and improve so that they can carry forward the everlasting legacy that the RoKo portmanteau has established. RoKo? Stop them if you can.

THE GIST

- The T20 World Cup and Champions Trophy titles will not erase the bitter aftertaste of defeat to Australia in the final of the 50-over World Cup a year and a half back. But they most certainly will help soften the blow
- The two most senior and accomplished batters in the side took it upon themselves to deliver on the biggest stage of each tournament testifies to their inner steel and single-minded determination
- Every run from here on is a bonus from an individual standpoint because it is for the common cause that their thoughts are aligned and in sync. These two legends run concurrently for so long; they may not have many miles left in their tired but willing legs, so it is imperative that the others continue to want to learn and improve so that they can carry forward

School of law inaugurated

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Chief Justice of India M.N. Venkatachaliah, and former Chief Minister M. Veerappa Moily, among others, participated in the inaugural ceremony of K.H. Patil School of Law and the birth centenary of former Minister K.H. Patil at Vidhana Soudha on Thursday. Law Minister H.K. Patil is the son of K.H. Patil.

Festival on April 26

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Sri Sheshapureeswarar Temple in Kudavasal in Thiruvarur district of Tamil Nadu, will be hosting the Sri Rahu - Kethu Peyarchi (transit) festival on April 26 at 4.20 p.m. Devotees are invited to take part, according to a release.

Woman electrocuted while trying to draw power for water pump

BWSSB assistant executive engineer claims the victim was illegally drawing power; police begin probe

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 58-year-old woman was electrocuted while attempting to draw power for a water pump in Anandapura, Chamarajpet in Bengaluru on Thursday morning. The victim, Selvi Murugan, was trying to operate the pump to extract water from the Cauvery water pipeline. She is survived by her four children.

The Chamarajpet police have received a complaint from local residents. "We have received a complaint, and an FIR is registered. A probe has been launched to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident," a police official stated.

An assistant executive engineer (AEE) from the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) claimed that the woman was illegally drawing power to run the pump. "This area is a slum. Despite having legal water connections, residents often install pumps to extract water directly from the pipeline. Unfortunately, while attempting to fix the wiring, she was electrocuted," the official explained.

Police inspecting the spot where the woman was electrocuted in Bengaluru on Thursday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

A Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) official stated that an investigation would be conducted to determine how the woman and other residents were accessing electricity for their pumps. "Illegally drawing power is dangerous, and can lead to fatal accidents like this. People must avoid such activities," the official warned.

The incident has raised concerns about illegal power usage and the risks involved in unauthorised water extraction.

Residents protest

Outraged by the recurring water shortage and the dangerous methods residents are forced to use to access water, locals staged a protest from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., blocking a major road. The protest was only called off after local MLA Zameer Ahmad intervened and assured action.

Residents say the lack of direct water supply to homes has forced them to install motors near electric poles to draw water through a single Cauvery pipeline. "This has been the fourth case of water supply issues, yet we still don't have proper access. The supply begins at 3 a.m. and ends by 7 a.m., forcing women to use unsafe methods to collect water," said Murali, a local resident. With just 100-300 official connections in some lanes, residents claim they are struggling to provide water for nearly 1,200 households. "If we got a daily supply, we'd have no issue paying for electricity," said Dilesh Raj, another resident.

Residents also allege that repeated complaints to BWSSB officials have gone unheard. "No officials came. Instead, Bescom disconnected the switch we used to pump water," said Karthik, a resident.

Dog squad to be raised to tackle drug problem in prisons

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Minister says that several steps are being taken for strict surveillance, including installation of 280 AI-empowered cameras

In the light of increased cases of use of narcotics in prisons across Karnataka, the State is establishing dog squads to sniff out narcotics in prisons.

Difficult to identify

"Despite surveillance, drugs find entry into prisons and it becomes difficult for humans to identify them. Hence, we are planning to raise dog squads to be deployed in prisons," Home Minister G. Parameshwara told the Legislative Council in response to a question to BJP member Prathap Simha Nayak on security in the prisons.

Till now, sniffer dogs from the K-9 canine squad were being used whenever there was requirement. He said that several steps are being taken for strict surveillance, including installation of 280 AI-empowered cameras, jammers in 66 prisons, and baggage scanners and walkie talkies bought from funds released by Centre Personnel of Karnataka Industrial Security Force.

Action taken

The Minister also said that 248 cases had been registered for illegal activities in prison and nine cases registered against 22 prison personnel for colluding in illegal activities.

1,682 km of city's sub-arterial stretches to be white-topped

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has allocated ₹9,000 crore towards white-topping of 1,682 km of road in the city. Disclosing this to Legislative Council in response to a question from Congress member H.P. Sudham Das, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Thursday said that out of the 1,682 km stretch of sub-arterial roads, work on 196 km has commenced already.

A file photo of white-topping work being taken up in Bengaluru.

Detailing the government's effort to address the traffic issues in the city, Mr. Shivakumar said that the DPR of the 40 km tunnel road project is ready, the project has been approved and tender will be called immediately. "There is no alternative to tunnel road," he said. He also said that the government is building 300 km of new 50-feet wide buffer roads in the city along the storm water drains, especially in areas such as ITPL, R.R. Nagar and Thanisandra at the cost of ₹3,000 crore. "We are also planning to issue TDRs to build roads."

Among other efforts, he listed the PRR works at a cost of ₹27,000 crore and 109 km of double-decker roads in the metro alignment at a cost of ₹9,000 crores that are envisaged to address traffic issues.

Rising temperature: Advocates exempted from wearing black coats in trial courts till May 31

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has exempted advocates from wearing black coats while appearing for their cases before the district and taluk courts across the State till May 31 in view of rising temperature.

notification

They, however, have to wear a white shirt with a white neckband compulsorily while appearing before these courts, stated a notification issued by the High Court on Wednesday.

The exemption has been granted following the representations given by the Advocates' Association, Bengaluru, and the Karnataka State Bar Council citing similar exemption granted in the States such as Maharashtra and Goa. While all the court halls in the Principal Bench of the High Court in Bengaluru and the Benches in Dharwad and Kalaburagi have modern air-condition facility, the court halls in the district and taluks courts have no such facility.

DK MP urges Gadkari to address issue of Bengaluru-Mangaluru road connectivity

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Dakshina Kannada MP Capt. Brijesh Chowta met Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari to discuss the critical issue of Mangaluru-Bengaluru road connectivity with specific focus on the Shiradi Ghat bypass project.

During the meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday, the MP highlighted the urgent need for intervention to address bureaucratic delays at the State level, particularly in finalising the road alignment on the ghat stretch and securing forest clearances that are holding up the project.

He asked Mr. Gadkari to urge the government of Karnataka for immediate action to resolve the roadblocks and facilitate seamless progress.

MP Chowta said the primary delay was due to pending forest clearance from the State government. Capt. Chowta briefed Mr. Gadkari on the progress made by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR), and provided updates on other key infrastructure projects along the Mangaluru-Bengaluru corridor.

A statement from the MP's office said Mr. Gadkari assured swift clearance from the Union Ministry once the government of Karnataka goes ahead with the required approvals and processes.

Capt. Chowta said, "I once again urge the Karnataka government to expedite these approvals at the earliest and facilitate the timely execution of this critical connectivity project, which is essential for commuter convenience as well as enabling economic growth for our region as well as the State."

MLA seeks govt.'s intervention to handle dog menace

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In an interesting episode, an MLA sought the government's intervention in the Assembly in handling street dog menace at an apartment complex in Bommanahalli of Bengaluru.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, BJP MLA Satish Reddy alleged that while several areas in Bengaluru were facing the menace of street dogs, an apartment in his constituency too was haunted by this problem, contrary to the belief that apartments have a protected environment.

Mr. Reddy alleged that an animal-loving woman resident of the apartment had illegally allowed street dogs to enter her apartment complex. These dogs were not only roaming around in the parking area of the apartment, but would also visit the 18th floor where she would reside, he said.

Fear psychosis

He alleged that fear psychosis had gripped the residents of the apartment due to the roaming of street dogs within the compound area and a few of them had been bitten by them. But the lady who had allowed the dogs inside the apartment had threatened to file sexual harassment case against those objecting to roaming of dogs, he said.

Mr. Reddy sought a direction from the government to the BBMP and police to act.

Action promised

Responding positively to the issue raised by the MLA, Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, who replied on behalf of the government, assured the House of issuing necessary instructions to the authorities concerned.

Once a go-to shopping destination for many, Majestic area now hardly sees customers

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

For many old-time Bengalureans, Janata Bazaar and Alankaar Pearl Plaza in Majestic were the prime shopping centres before the advent of malls in the city. Be it these large shopping spaces or the streets where everything from a pencil to electronic gadgets, Majestic was a shopping hub that offered everything customers needed, right in the middle of the city. In a way, these spaces and streets still offer those things, but the takers are very few.

In Alankaar Plaza, where there are a little over 300 shops, mostly selling clothes, at least 50 have closed down due to financial losses. FILE PHOTO

Outside the Kempegowda Bus Station, towards K.G. Road, hundreds of shops selling clothes, footwear, jewellery, stationery, earphones, chargers and much more can be found at every crossroad. On a weekday afternoon, the crowd was thin. But the sellers said that such is the scenario on most days.

Only festival crowd

"Even five years ago, we used to get more customers. But now, we get some customers only during festivals. Otherwise, one or two college students come now and then," said Afreen, who was selling clothes on one of the crossroads.

The same fate has befallen Sri Raj Stationeries, a well-established shop in the area. "There are stationery shops in every area now. It is not like before when they had to come here to get everything in one place at good prices. Business is down by almost 70% - 80% and only our old customers come. We do not get walk-ins anymore," said Rahul R., the owner of the store.

Janata Bazaar and Alankar Plaza

In the middle of Majestic, on opposite sides, are the famous shopping spots Janata Bazaar and Alankaar Pearl Plaza. While the former was probably the first supermarket of Bengaluru, the latter was almost like a mall.

"We used to get a lot of shoppers, especially government employees from the Central Business District (CBD) who would come to buy their monthly needs like soaps, shampoos, incense sticks and textiles among other things. But now most are not even aware of the Bazaar," said a salesperson there. The building, which is a century old, looks a little dingy now with very little activity.

In Alankaar Plaza, where there are a little over 300 shops, mostly selling clothes, at least 50 have shut shop due to financial losses. "Nobody needs shops for clothes anymore. Online markets have taken over. While those from Bengaluru rarely pay a visit here anymore, those from other cities like Tumakuru come here as we offer the best rates for clothes especially worn for functions. For those who live here, the experience of shopping here is not worth the traffic that it will take to get here from other parts of the city," said Ashok, a member of Alankaar Pearl Plaza Owners' Association.

While remembering their shopping days in Majestic with nostalgia, shoppers say that they do not find the need to go there for shopping anymore. "Around 15 years ago, our festive season started with a visit to Majestic to buy clothes for all the upcoming festivals. My parents believed that the best prices were available there. Today, each e-commerce site offers better deals than the other, and I can get clothes delivered to my house, return them, and exchange without travelling far," said Deeksha Joshi, a content writer.

As the Karnataka Budget for 2025-26 announced plans for the redevelopment of the Kempegowda Bus Station at Majestic, The Hindu, in a six-part series, will explore the various facets of the pete area. This is the fourth story in the series.

Holi takes on colour of water conservation in city

Anupama Mani
Chandan M. Naik
BENGALURU

After last summer's water woes, which forced the authorities to announce a slew of water conservation measures, this Holi has taken on the colour of water conservation in Bengaluru. Residents, event organisers, and local businesses are embracing sustainable practices to ensure a joyful yet responsible Holi.

In the previous year, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) had prohibited the use of potable water for pool parties and rain dances during Holi. While there are no specific guidelines for celebrations this year, V. Ram Prasath Manohar, chairman of BWSSB, said, "Even this year, we are making the same appeal to the people to judiciously use water, making it an eco-friendly holi and pledging to safeguard the environment."

Following BWSSB's standing order against misuse of potable water, the celebration of Holi has taken different turns across the city. Event organisers and party planners have introduced innovative measures to minimise water usage.

Charan M.N., Director of Navavarn Events, based in Kasturi Nagar, explained how they have made changes and restructured their Holi events to comply with the water ban. "Our approach now involves using water very minimally - only in the form of a 'mist rain dance' setup to create a refreshing ambiance without violating the ban," adding, "We are promoting a dry Holi this year, focusing on eco-friendly celebrations. We are using dry colours made from recycled flowers collected from temples and convention centers, aligning with our commitment to sustainability."

Chetan M.S.R, owner of MSR events and the manager of Rang De Holi 2025 event, said, "We are using sprinklers this time to judiciously use water as they save around 70% water. We are also using only organic colours for the celebrations." However, with all the revised celebrations, event organisers have noted a decline in public participation. Mr. Charan noted a major decline in bookings, particularly among open venues and premium gated communities. "Unfortunately, we have observed about an 80% drop in bookings from last year, leading to significant cancellations," he added.

The Bangalore Apartment Federation has also issued guidelines for Holi for all its member apartments. "We recommend using flowers and dry colours during festivities. With water scarcity affecting some areas, caution in celebrations is essential to ensure a sustainable approach," said Vikram Rai, secretary of Bangalore Apartment Federation.

Varsha K., an industrial psychologist said, "It's good to use organic colours. In a way, it helps reduce harm to nature and the skin while also preserving traditions. Many cultures have long used natural dyes derived from plants, minerals, and herbs, making them a sustainable and heritage-rich choice."

Kidney disease no longer just for the elderly, say experts

Doctors stress that maintaining an ideal body weight, following a balanced diet, and ensuring six to eight hours of sleep are crucial steps toward kidney health; despite the increasing prevalence of kidney-related issues among young Indians, awareness remains alarmingly low

Siddharth Kumar Singh

An artist crafting a sand sculpture at R.K. Beach, Visakhapatnam, on the eve of World Kidney Day. K.R DEEPAK

As the world observed World Kidney Day on March 13, medical experts are sounding the alarm over the increasing prevalence of kidney-related ailments among young Indians. Traditionally considered a health concern for older individuals, chronic kidney disease (CKD) is now showing up even among teenagers and young adults, fueled by poor lifestyle choices, unregulated supplement consumption, and lack of awareness.

Studies indicate that kidney problems affect approximately 10% to 15% of Indians, cutting across all age groups, including teenagers. Unlike other ailments, early-stage kidney disease does not present obvious warning signs like swelling or changes in urine output, making regular screening essential, says Manisha Sahay, professor and head of the department of nephrology at Osmania General Hospital. She warns that kidney disease is a silent killer, often showing no symptoms in its early stages.

"In many countries, routine kidney function tests such as urine albumin and creatinine blood tests are conducted annually. These tests are inexpensive yet provide crucial insights into kidney health. In India, at the very least, high-risk individuals should undergo these tests," Dr. Manisha says. She identifies high-risk groups, as those individuals with diabetes, hypertension, cardiac conditions, obesity, or a family history of kidney disease. Young people exposed to pesticides, frequent users of painkillers, and women with pregnancy-related hypertension are also vulnerable.

Addressing the need for lifestyle modifications, Dr. Manisha stresses the importance of maintaining ideal body weight through regular exercise, and following a balanced diet, and limiting salt intake to five grams per day. She advises against excessive fast food consumption and hidden sources of sodium, such as soy sauce, recommending natural seasonings like lemon and black pepper instead. Staying hydrated, ensuring six to eight hours of sleep, and managing blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels are crucial steps toward kidney health.

Inadequate water increase risk

The rising concern over kidney health among young people is echoed by Avula Naveen Reddy, consultant nephrologist at the Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology (AINU). He has observed a significant increase in kidney-related cases among Gen-Z (individuals born between 1997 and 2012). "Many gym-goers report elevated serum creatinine levels, while some experience protein leakage in their urine. Additionally, stress and inadequate water intake among students are leading to a higher incidence of urinary infections," he explains.

At AINU, three to four kidney-related cases involving individuals aged 16 to 20 years are reported each month, a noticeable rise compared to previous years. Routine screenings, particularly for students planning to study abroad, have revealed underlying kidney issues that may have otherwise gone undiagnosed. Dr. Reddy urges young individuals to avoid over-the-counter painkillers, minimise whey protein supplements, and focus on plant-based protein sources. He also highlights the importance of proper hydration, noting that many students reduce their water intake due to poorly maintained restrooms in schools and colleges, increasing their risk of kidney stones and urinary infections.

Symptoms such as excessive foaming in urine (a sign of protein leakage), fever with abdominal pain, a burning sensation while urinating, and traces of blood in urine should not be ignored. While these conditions may not always be life-threatening, early detection and timely intervention are crucial, Dr. Reddy notes.

Despite the increasing prevalence of kidney-related issues among young Indians, awareness remains alarmingly low. Experts stress that prevention is far more effective than treatment, as dialysis and kidney transplants remain inaccessible for many due to limited resources.

"India performs around 15,000 kidney transplants per year, while the demand is nearly two lakh. With each dialysis session requiring around 125 litres of water, even expanding dialysis facilities cannot meet the growing need. The only viable solution is to prevent kidney failure in the first place," Dr. Manisha points out.

D. Sree Bhushan Raju, professor and head of the department of nephrology at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), highlights additional risk factors. Preterm babies with a birth weight below 2.5 kilograms are at a higher risk of developing kidney-related complications later in life. Teenagers and young adults aged 15 to 20 who are obese, as well as those with a family history of kidney disease, also face increased vulnerability. Additionally, individuals with childhood kidney conditions such as nephrotic syndrome, which leads to excessive protein loss and body swelling must be closely monitored. Structural kidney abnormalities requiring early surgery further heighten the risk of kidney disease in adulthood.

Symptoms such as excessive foaming in urine (a sign of protein leakage), fever with abdominal pain, a burning sensation while urinating, and traces of blood in urine should not be ignored

One of the most ignored warning signs is the presence of blood in urine, which many dismiss as a one-time occurrence. Dr. Raju also raises concerns over the widespread use of protein supplements like whey protein and creatine among gym-goers, which can contribute to kidney damage.

The prolonged use of painkillers, antacids, and other medications without medical supervision only exacerbates the risk.

Hypertension and diabetes, sometimes detected accidentally, are also significant contributors to kidney disease. Dr. Raju explains that CKD often remains asymptomatic until nearly 90% of kidney function is lost. Even when symptoms appear, they are frequently mistaken for unrelated issues, such as back pain.

A common misconception is that kidney failure leads to reduced urine output; in reality, many patients on dialysis still pass normal amounts of urine, he said.

To combat this silent progression, Dr. Raju recommends that individuals at high risk undergo creatinine tests every six months. Those with a family history of kidney problems or other risk factors should opt for annual check-ups. He also advises preterm and low-birth-weight individuals to avoid excessive physical exertion aimed at rapid weight gain and warns against the unregulated use of supplements and medications.

Kidney disease in children

For children, kidney disease can arise from conditions such as cystic dysplastic kidneys, polycystic kidneys, hereditary kidney diseases, and chronic glomerular and tubular disorders. According to V.V.R. Satya Prasad, senior consultant paediatric nephrologist at Rainbow Children's Hospital, CKD is irreversible and requires dialysis or kidney transplantation for survival. Since kidneys filter waste and fluids from the blood, their failure results in harmful waste accumulation, leading to high blood pressure and, ultimately, kidney failure. End-stage renal disease (ESRD) occurs when kidneys lose 90% of function, necessitating urgent medical intervention.

With kidney disease cases rising among the younger generation, prioritising routine screenings, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and staying vigilant about early symptoms can help curb this growing health crisis before it escalates further.
(siddharth.kumar@thehindu.co.in)

What is Hantavirus and how does it spread?

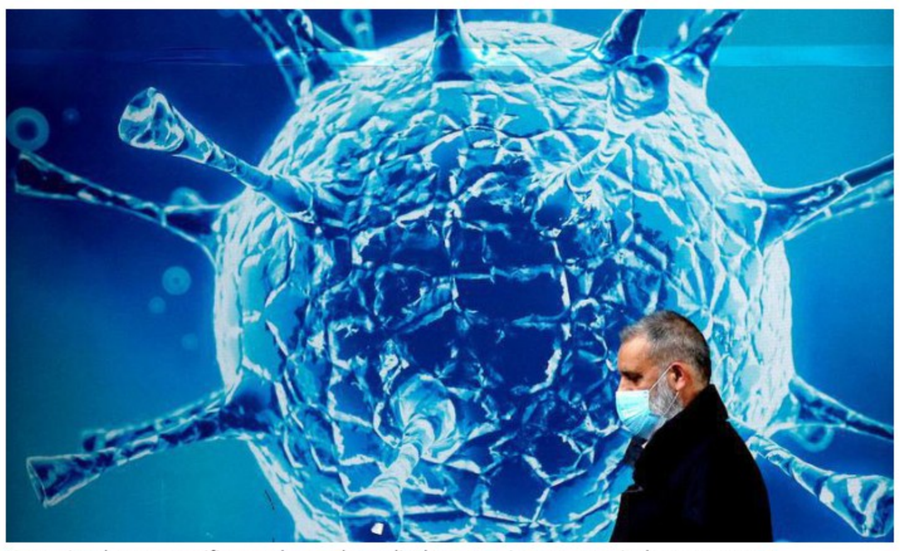
Athira Elssa Johnson

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hantaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause severe, potentially fatal illnesses lncluding hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) and hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS), characterised by severe respiratory illness and internal bleeding with kidney failure.

The recent passing of Betsy Hackman, wife of renowned American actor Gene Hackman, has drawn attention to this deadly virus. Although cases are rare, the severity of the illness makes understanding its spread, symptoms, and treatment options crucial.

How does hantavirus occur?

Hantaviruses are a family of viruses carried by certain rodents, such as deer mice, white-footed mice, rice rats, and cotton rats. According to the CDC, humans typically contract hantavirus through contact with infected rodent waste, primarily via aerosolisation when disturbing contaminated materials, such as sweeping or cleaning infested areas.


Hantavirus has no specific cure, but early medical care can improve survival rates. REUTERS

According to the World Health Organisation's manual, hantaviruses are a family of viruses with several strains exhibiting varying degrees of severity.

The infection cause flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, and fatigue within 1-8 weeks of exposure, followed by a severe respiratory phase characterised by shortness of breath, coughing, and chest tightness, which can rapidly escalate to acute respiratory distress and potentially fatal outcomes without prompt medical intervention.

High-risk groups include people who work or live in rodent-prone areas, such as farmers, construction workers, campers, and homeowners with rodent infestations.

The infection cause flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, and fatigue, followed by respiratory phase characterised by shortness of breath, coughing

The CDC also emphasis that children under five, pregnant women, and individuals with weakened immune systems should avoid handling pet rodents .

What are the treatment options?

Currently, even though there is no specific antiviral treatment or cure for hantavirus, medical care focuses on managing symptoms and supporting the patient through the most dangerous phases of the illness. In cases of HPS, patients are often given oxygen therapy to ease breathing difficulties. Severe cases may require intensive care, including mechanical ventilation to assist lung function.

Early detection and immediate medical attention are crucial for preventing severe respiratory distress. Preventive methods through rodent control and adherence to proper sanitation protocols is crucial.
(athira.elssa@thehindu.co.in)

The prevalence of self-medication was 19.7%, associated with factors such as staying alone.

High rates of self-treatment among older adults: study

Serena Josephine M.

A cross-sectional study conducted among 600 older adults across six Indian cities has found that the prevalence of polypharmacy and unsafe self-medication is high in this population. Polypharmacy refers to the intake of five or more medications per day. Among those who self-medicated, a majority lacked knowledge about self-medication, and did not understand the risks associated with it, the study found.

In the study - '*Polypharmacy and self-medication among older adults in Indian urban communities - a cross-sectional study*' - published in *Scientific Reports*, researchers Das, S., Gnanavel, P., Smanla, S. et al. from the Department of Global Public Health, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden, the Indian Council of Medical Research - Centre for Aging and Mental Health, Kolkata and a number of medical institutions including the Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Omandurar Government Estate, Chennai, have taken a close look at the medication usage and self-medication practices among older adults in New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Ujjain, Patna and Guwahati.

A total of 100 older adults were recruited in each city. Of the 600, 477 were aged 60 to 80 years and 123 were the age of 80. More than half of them (353), were women. There were three or more co-morbid conditions in 423 of these individuals. The researchers used an updated screening tool, the Older Persons' Prescriptions and Screening Tool to Alert to Right Treatment, (STOPP-START) criteria to identify potentially inappropriate medications (PIM) and potential prescribing omissions (PPO) respectively.

Polypharmacy rates over 30%

The study found that the prevalence of polypharmacy was 33.7% with significant associations to multiple comorbidities, recent transition of care and recent hospitalisation. A total of 314 individuals were taking one to four oral allopathic medicines (solid formulations) daily.

The highest prevalence of polypharmacy was found in Guwahati (57%), while Ujjain had the lowest prevalence (11.7%). A total of 2,741 medicines were prescribed to all individuals. The most common were antihypertensive medicines followed by antidiabetic medicines, hypolipidemic medicines, calcium supplements and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, the study said. The researchers found the proportion of prescriptions with PIM and PPO were 28.8% and 20.3% respectively.

A total of 164 persons were using concomitant traditional and complementary medicines mostly for chronic conditions. Of these, 80 persons used certain traditional and complementary solid oral formulations without names or labels. In fact, the authors observed that the presence of unlabelled solid oral formulations among traditional medications raised concerns regarding patient safety. The prevalence of self-medication was 19.7%, associated with factors, such as staying alone, multiple comorbidities and recent hospitalisations. The most common medicines that were self-medicated were nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (59%) followed by paracetamol (42.4%) and antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infection and diarrhoea (33.9%). A lack of awareness and unsafe practices were found among self-medicating individuals.

These findings emphasise the necessity for interventions to promote safe medication use in older adults, the authors said.
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Agencies sceptical over Ranya's claims

The actor, who was caught smuggling 14.2 kg of gold at KIA, has claimed that she was a mule and it was her first time bringing gold from Dubai

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Ranya Rao, 34, who was caught smuggling 14.2 kgs of gold at Kempegowda International Airport on March 3, has claimed that she was a mule and it was the first time she had brought gold from Dubai.

However, multiple agencies part of the probe seem to be sceptical of this theory. They suspect that she was part of a "coordinated smuggling syndicate, possibly operating out of Dubai" and this was not her first trip.

In her statement to the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) after her arrest, part of the remand application submitted to the court, accessed by *The Hindu*, Ranya has claimed that she got a bunch of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) calls from foreign numbers over two weeks preceding her trip to Dubai and a man "of African-American accent" said he would come in a white gown and hand over gold to her at Gate A Terminal 3 of Dubai International Airport, as per which he did. She claimed he was over 6-feet tall and wheatish in colour. Ranya further claimed that she saw YouTube videos to learn how to hide the gold handed over to her - 12 gold bars and 5 cut pieces, which she hid over her body using a crepe bandage and adhesive tape, around her waist and on her calf muscles, in her front pockets and shoes. She claimed she was instructed to dump gold in an autorickshaw at a traffic signal at the end of the service road outside KIA.

Ranya Rao

Customs declaration

However, her arrest memo, accessed by *The Hindu*, shows that DRI recovered two Dubai customs declarations dated November 13, 2024, and December 20, 2024, in the name of "Harshavardini Ranya" from her residence on Lavelle Road during their search.

This showed that she had purchased gold from Dubai in the recent past, declared to Dubai Customs that she intended to travel to Geneva with the said gold, but diverted and came to India.

Sources also pointed out that Ranya had made at least 27 trips to Dubai in just over a year, including four trips in 15 days, despite not having any business interests or family there. In her statement, she claimed she was a "freelance real estate agent" in Dubai.

Sources said that while claiming that an unknown person instructed her to become a mule to carry the consignment from Dubai to Bengaluru, remains silent as to why she agreed to abide by it. Agencies also point to ₹2.67 crore cash and jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore recovered from her residence and say that mules are usually those who take big risks for a small amount, and Ranya, as the step daughter of a senior IPS officer and a film actor with a big cache of cash at home, did not fit into that profile.

DRI has also arrested Tarun Raj, a close friend of Ranya and the grandson of a big hotelier from the city, in the case, indicating that the ring's activities were perhaps beyond being a mule.

Meanwhile, multiple central agencies who have joined the probe, have till date searched/surveyed at least two jewellery stores and one firm that provides gold loans, indicating the possible involvement of local gold traders.

DRI plaint hints at 'coordinated smuggling syndicate'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Based on the complaint by Abhishek Chandra Gupta, Additional Director, DRI, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered an FIR on March 7, a copy of which *The Hindu* has accessed.

In his complaint, Mr. Gupta flags two cases of two foreign nationals, an Omani and another UAE national, caught trying to smuggle 21.28 kg of gold from Dubai to Mumbai on March 6, days after Ranya Rao was caught at Kempegowda International Airport.

"The above two cases detected in quick succession involving passengers making trips from Dubai, the attempted smuggling of large quantities of gold into India and the high frequency of these visit points to a possible nexus with a coordinated smuggling syndicate, possibly operating from Dubai (UAE)," Mr. Gupta said in his complaint.

'Ranya asked for escort'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On March 3, when DRI officials intercepted the actor, she was escorted by Basavaraj, head constable of International Airport Police.

In his statement to DRI, accessed by *The Hindu*, he said that "as a gesture of courtesy, he has been from time to time instructed to provide protocol assistance to family members of senior officials of the department.

Similarly, he was asked by his senior, Ramachandra Rao (DGP), to assist his family members and relatives by extending protocol during their arrival and departure.

In this manner, by providing protocol assistance, he came to know Ranya in the past few years."

He further said that on March 3 morning, Ranya Rao called him and said she was arriving at KIA from Dubai at 6.20 p.m. and that she requires protocol assistance for the same.

He also said that he had provided protocol services to Ranya three to four times earlier.

CBI probing 'role' of public servants in gold smuggling case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is probing the suspected role of public servants in the large-scale smuggling of gold from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to India, based on the inputs shared by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), which recently arrested Kannada actor Ranya Rao allegedly with smuggled gold.

CBI FIR

According to the FIR registered by the CBI, the DRI complaint provide details of the two foreigners, an Omani and a UAE national, arrested at Mumbai international airport while allegedly attempting to smuggle in 21.28 kg of gold worth ₹18.92 crore, on March 6. They had come from Dubai.

The agency alleged that the two accused have previously arrived at Mumbai airport multiple times.

In the complaint, the agency also gave details about an "Indian woman passenger" coming from Dubai who was intercepted at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on March 3, when she was allegedly attempting to smuggle in 14.2 kg of gold worth ₹12.56 crore.

Ms. Rao was taken into custody. Searches at her residence led to the purported seizure of gold jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore and ₹2.67 crore in cash.

Temporary injunction

Meanwhile, the High Court of Karnataka has passed an *ex parte* temporary injunction restraining 39 media houses from publishing, telecasting and disseminating any content that is defamatory of K. Ramachandra Rao, Director General of Police (Karnataka Police Housing Corporation Ltd), who is the stepfather of Ranya Rao.

The temporary injunction granted by the High Court would be in force till the next date of hearing of the petition.

The petitioner contends that false and defamatory contents, affecting his reputation, are being telecast and published on various media platforms since the arrest of Ms. Ranya.

Basketball coach found dead

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A female basketball coach was found dead at her residence in Pothalappa Garden on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Sonia, 26. She had been known for her basketball skills for the last seven or eight years. She had participated in State and national level basketball tournaments.

Sonia was expected to participate in a tournament to be held in Dubai next month. The exact cause of death is not known. Her family claimed that she died after falling in the bathroom.

"She fell in the bathroom while taking a bath and suffered a serious head injury, and she died on the way to the hospital," family members have told the police.

The police have registered an unnatural death report.

User fee for waste collection gets government approval

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government has finally approved the long-pending proposal of the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) to levy a user fee for door-to-door waste collection. The fee is likely to be included in the property tax from April 1 in the new financial year of 2025-26.

With the government approving a user fee for door-to-door waste collection, BSWML, which now manages SWM in the city, is set to take a major step toward financial independence.

The company will soon open an escrow account to manage the revenue generated from the fee, marking a shift from its reliance on the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) for funding.

The Urban Development Department (UDD) gave the green signal for BSWML's proposal last week to levy a user fee for providing door-to-door collection, segregation, and scientific disposal services.

The user fee will be added to the property tax, and consumers must pay it along with their tax. Earlier, the company planned to include the fee in electricity bills of Bescom, but this was later changed. The fee will be determined by the built-up area with six different slabs.

Fee chart

Built-up area (sq.ft)	Monthly fee
Up to 600	₹10
600 to 1,000	₹50
1,000 to 2,000	₹100
2,000 to 3,000	₹150
3,000 to 4,000	₹200
Above 4,000	₹400

Additionally, the government has permitted BSWML to charge bulk waste generators—such as apartment complexes and large commercial establishments— ₹12 per kg if they lack an empaneled waste processing agency or an in-situ waste management system. If a 100 flat apartment generates 100 kg/day, waste management will now costs ₹1200 /day.

BSWML is currently dependent on the BBMP to cover waste management expenses. The BBMP allocates about ₹1,000 crore for this in its budget. BSWML has been urging the government to introduce a user fee, a policy already adopted by the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC). The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) guidelines also mandate municipal corporations to collect user fees for SWM.

A senior official from the BSWML talking to *The Hindu* said, "Everyday BSWML collects, transports and disposes off 6,000 tonnes of waste generated in the city. Annually, nearly ₹600 crore is spent on the same. With no independent revenue collection, the company has been struggling to pay the contractors, due to which the payments of waste collectors are also being delayed. For the last four months, the salaries of the waste collectors have not been paid."

"The company will soon open an escrow account for funds generated through fee collection. Besides the user fee, BSWML is also exploring revenue from Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic, electronic waste, and construction and demolition waste. This will ensure financial independence and streamline payments," the official added.

The official further said the bidders for company's Integrated Solid Waste Management System will show interest as the company will become self-reliant to make payments.

V. Ram Prasad, a solid waste management expert, said the State's approval is a step in the right direction for the city's waste management. He added that BSWML has the right to charge a fee for its services, and the opposition, the BJP, cannot object as the Swachh Bharat Mission, an initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, mandates user fees in its guidelines. "The company can now break free from BBMP's financial dependence," he said.

Waste collection resumes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

About a day after garbage collection in the city was affected due to a protest by the residents of Kannur village panchayat, waste disposal at the Mittaganagalli landfill resumed on Thursday. However, at some places, the pile of mixed waste was not picked.

Anand Reddy, a contractor handling waste at J.P. Nagar, told *The Hindu* that the protest was withdrawn on Wednesday midnight following talks with officials. The discussions were initiated by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

Mr. Reddy said that for about a day, the residents did not allow trucks to dump mixed waste at landfills. Protestors argued that they were unable to live in the area due to the stench and flow of leachate.

A senior BBMP official said the problem has been resolved for now, but it is likely to recur.

The only permanent solution will be to establish four integrated solid waste management plants on the outskirts of the city, which is under way, the official said.

State govt. mulls over raising retirement age for super-speciality doctors

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Sharan Prakash Patil says the govt. has been deliberating on the issue for some time and promises to discuss the matter with the Chief Minister

The State government is actively considering increasing the retirement age of doctors serving in super-speciality hospitals under the Medical Education Department from the current 60 years.

During an interaction with doctors at the Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research on Thursday, Medical Education and Skill Development minister Sharan Prakash Patil assured medical professionals that the government is keen on extending the retirement age to retain experienced doctors in super-specialty hospitals.

The move comes in response to concerns raised by senior doctors at Jayadeva, who pointed out that after spending nearly 35 years in medical education and training, they only get to serve around 20 to 25 years before retiring at 60.

"We have been deliberating on this issue for some time. To ensure better healthcare services and make the most of our experienced doctors, I will soon discuss the matter with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and propose raising the retirement age for doctors in super-specialty hospitals," Mr. Patil said.

Insurance and infrastructure boost

In addition to the proposed retirement age extension, Mr. Patil also announced an insurance facility, a significant benefit for doctors working in the hospitals run by the Medical Education Department.

Currently, these doctors are not covered under any government insurance scheme.

The State is planning to implement Jyothi Sanjivini, a scheme already available under the Health and Family Welfare Department.

To further strengthen medical infrastructure, the minister said that the government would allocate additional funds to Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research to introduce robotic surgery facilities.

"To stay ahead in medical innovation and technology, we are committed to equipping Jayadeva Institute with the latest machines and infrastructure. If Jayadeva Hospital cannot have the best, no other hospital in India can," he asserted.

Other key announcements

Five additional operation theatres for the pediatric cardiac surgery department, the establishment of a dedicated research department within the hospital, implementation of an e-hospital and central monitoring system for digitized medical records accessible to doctors and salary hike for contract and outsourced medical and non-medical staff are some of the other key announcements the minister made during his visit.

Timings
BENGALURU

FRIDAY, MAR. 14		
RISE	06:28	SET 18:30
RISE	18:39	SET 06:23
SATURDAY, MAR. 15		
RISE	06:27	SET 18:30
RISE	19:24	SET 06:57
SUNDAY, MAR. 16		
RISE	06:26	SET 18:30
RISE	20:09	SET 07:31

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	21
Mysuru	34	19
Bengaluru	35	21

Bengaluru Today
33°C Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be little warm. Night will be leasant. Mostly dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be warm. Night will be slight cool.

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THE HINDU
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KAT cancels circle inspector's suspension, reinstates him

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The Karnataka Administrative Tribunal has cancelled the State government's order to suspend a circle inspector of police and reinstated him in service at Khanapur Police Station where he was serving earlier.

The State government issued the order of suspension to inspector Manjunath Naik following complaints against him regarding the arrest of MLC C.T. Ravi.

This followed an incident of him using abusive language against Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar on the floor of the House during the recent winter session. The government order cited the reason for suspension as dereliction of duty and negligence.

This came following Mr. Ravi's charge that the police arrested him in violation of rules and of his privilege of being a legislator. He also said that the police tried to eliminate him.

The government clarified that there were no such intentions.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of people sheltering in Russia's air base in Syria

9,000 Russia's air base in Syria is sheltering about 9,000 people seeking refuge from a wave of sectarian violence, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said. Ms. Zakharova said Moscow was shocked by events in Syria. REUTERS

The amount Sweden is giving to Ukraine for reconstruction

138 in $ million. The package, Sweden's largest ever civilian aid programme according to its Minister for International Development Benjamin Dousa, includes support for the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure, as well as mine clearance and health worker training. REUTERS

Number of snakebite deaths reported in Odisha in 2023-25

1,859 According to the preliminary report, 1,150 people died due to snakebites in 2023-24, while another 709 lost their lives in 2024-25, State Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) Minister Suresh Pujari said. PTI

Humanitarian aid packages sent to Druze in Syria by Israel

10,000 Israel has sent humanitarian aid to Druze communities in Syria over the past few weeks, its foreign ministry said on Thursday, in a further sign of Israel's support for the minority group. The packages included basic goods. REUTERS

Beneficiaries under the Swasthya Sathi scheme in West Bengal

8.72 in crore. Responding to a question by a Trinamool Congress MLA in the Assembly, Minister of State for Health, Chandrima Bhattacharya, said that over 2.44 crore families are registered under the healthcare scheme. PTI

COMPILED BY KUSHAL VARMA J.V.

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How can India meet its rising power demand?

Besides economic growth and urbanisation, climate change-induced heat stress is one of the key factors driving electricity demand. Episodes of power shortages in the last two years amid rapid growth in demand pose an important question. How should India act and plan to meet its rising energy demand reliably and cost-effectively?

EXPLAINER

Shalu Agrawal
Disha Agarwal

As the fastest-growing major economy in a rapidly heating world, India's electricity demand is growing fast. Since FY21, India's electricity consumption has risen at approximately 9% per annum, compared to an average of 5% annually in the preceding decade. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) had projected electricity demand to grow at a 6% CAGR between 2022 and 2030. However, recent trends suggest a strong likelihood of overshooting these estimates. Can India's power sector keep up with this demand and transition to renewables at the same time?

What's driving India's electricity demand?

Besides economic growth and urbanisation, climate change-induced heat stress, marked by increasingly hotter summers, is one of the key factors driving electricity demand. Currently, industries, households, and agriculture comprise 33%, 28%, and 19% of total electricity use in India, respectively. Yet, household electricity demand has grown the fastest over the past decade. The summer of 2024 witnessed a 40-50% year-on-year growth in room air conditioner sales, driven by rising incomes and record-breaking temperatures. All-India peak demand crossed 250 GW on May 30, 2024, which was 6.3% higher than projections. In 2025, after recording the warmest-ever February in 125 years, India must now brace for extended heatwaves and a peak electricity demand growth of 9-10%.

In short, India's electricity demand is growing fast and becoming more and more uncertain.

How has India met rising demand so far?

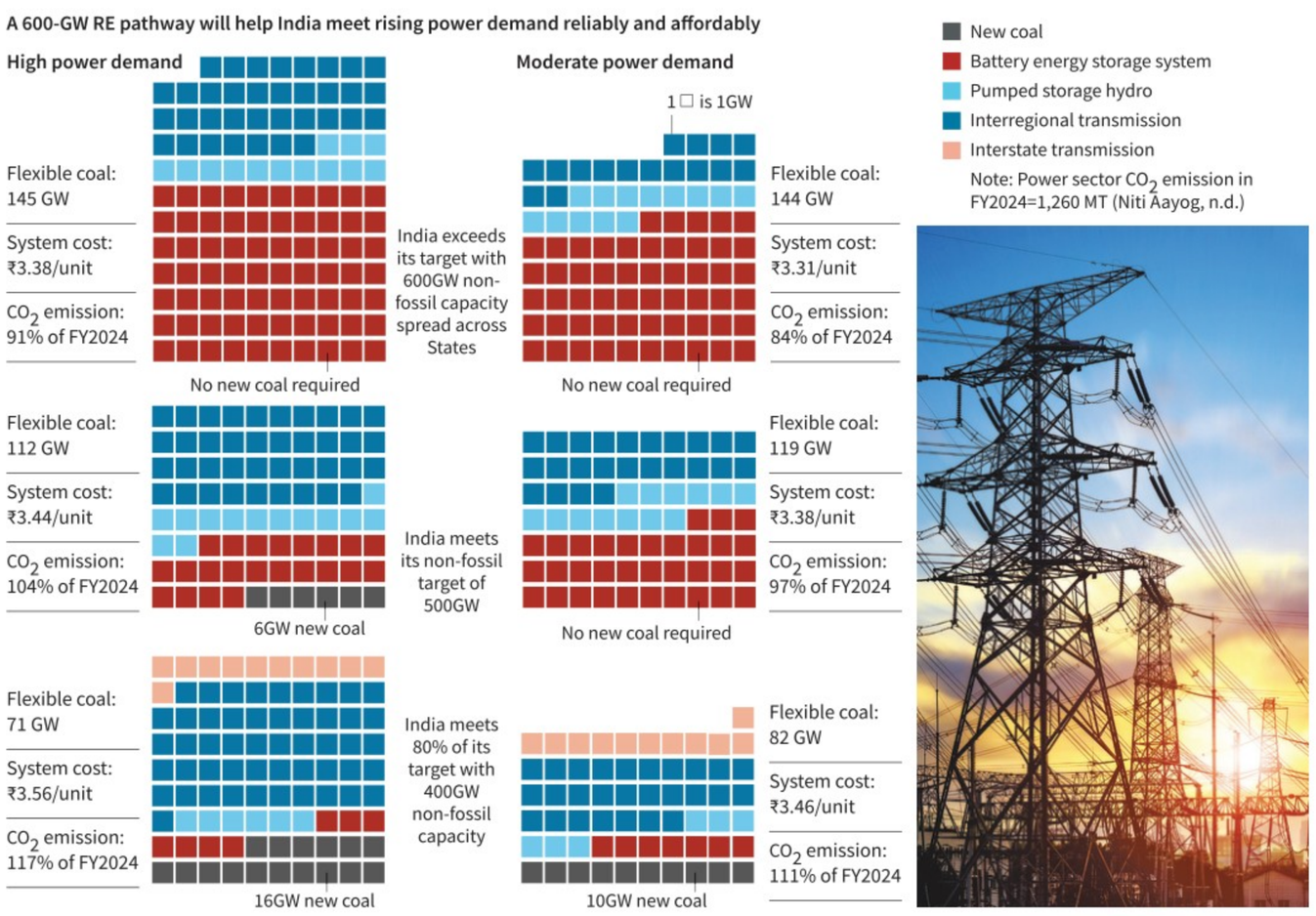
Since the early 2000s, power generation capacity has quadrupled to 460 GW, making India the third-largest electricity producer globally. Driven by the imperatives of clean energy transition, India's power sector is undergoing a major shift with the rise of Renewable Energy (RE) technologies like solar and wind. In 2010, the Indian government set a target of 20 GW of RE by 2020, which was revised upwards in 2014 to 175 GW by 2022. In 2021, India further amped its target to achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel power capacity by 2030.

The government has continuously adopted several long-term and short-term measures to meet the spikes in demand. For instance, to manage the peak in 2022, it increased coal allocation to the power sector and prioritised its transportation through railways. It also directed imported coal-based power plants to operate at full capacity. States that have added substantive solar capacities utilised the surplus solar power to meet day peaks. Nights peaks continue to pose a challenge.

In many ways, 2024 was a landmark year – India added a record 28 GW of new RE capacity, bumping up the share of RE in the electricity mix to 13.5%. The share of coal in the capacity mix fell below half, though it still caters to 75% of power demand. India's RE capacity now stands at 165 GW. Another 32 GW of RE is expected to be commissioned in 2025. In the following five years, India would need to add about 50 GW of RE every year to meet its 2030 goal.

The electric demand

Driven by the imperatives of clean energy transition, India's power sector is undergoing a major shift with the rise of Renewable Energy (RE) technologies like solar and wind


A 600-GW RE pathway will help India meet rising power demand reliably and affordably
High power demand
Moderate power demand
1 □ is 1GW
Flexible coal: 145 GW
System cost: ₹3.38/unit
CO_2 emission: 91% of FY2024
No new coal required
India exceeds its target with 600GW non-fossil capacity spread across States
Flexible coal: 144 GW
System cost: ₹3.31/unit
CO_2 emission: 84% of FY2024
No new coal required
Flexible coal: 112 GW
System cost: ₹3.44/unit
CO_2 emission: 104% of FY2024
6GW new coal
India meets its non-fossil target of 500GW
Flexible coal: 119 GW
System cost: ₹3.38/unit
CO_2 emission: 97% of FY2024
No new coal required
Flexible coal: 71 GW
System cost: ₹3.56/unit
CO_2 emission: 117% of FY2024
16GW new coal
India meets 80% of its target with 400GW non-fossil capacity
Flexible coal: 82 GW
System cost: ₹3.46/unit
CO_2 emission: 111% of FY2024
10GW new coal
New coal
Battery energy storage system
Pumped storage hydro
Interregional transmission
Interstate transmission
Note: Power sector CO_2 emission in FY2024=1,260 MT (Niti Aayog, n.d.)

Source: How can India meet its rising power demand? (2025)

Why should India further raise its clean energy ambitions?

Episodes of power shortages in the last two years amid rapid growth in demand pose an important question. How should India act and plan to meet its rising energy demand reliably and cost-effectively?

A new study by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) answers this question by simulating six scenarios of India's power sector in 2030. CEEW found that failure to achieve 500 GW of clean energy capacity by 2030 will lead to power shortages and higher power costs, even if demand grows moderately. For instance, 0.26% of the demand will not be met if we achieve only 400 GW. Just this small percentage alone could impact the power supply to ~1 million households for 2.5 hours daily. States in northern India would be the worst affected because of network constraints.

If demand grows faster (at 6.4% CAGR between 2023 and 2030 instead of 5.8%) and the 500 GW target is achieved, India will still need additional generation capacity to avoid major power shortages. Here, India has two choices – add six GW of new coal (beyond the under-construction capacities now) or 100 GW of new RE capacity (beyond the stated 500 GW). The first choice will meet the demand, but the coal fleet will remain under high stress with a likelihood of increased downtime. This could result in sudden shortages and increased costs. The study finds that the latter choice of 100 GW of new RE capacity, distributed across States, is a better option.

How can India aim for 600 GW by 2030?

India must achieve 600 GW of clean energy by 2030 to keep pace with demand. This will help the country deliver reliable power at lower costs, saving up to ₹42,400 crore ($5 billion) in procurement costs in 2030 alone. It will also yield higher social and health benefits, with 1,00,000 new jobs (during 2025-2030) and up to 23% lower emission of air pollutants in 2030.

However, a 600 GW target would require 70 GW of RE addition annually until 2030 which may sound wishful. Several on-ground and grid-related challenges are already restricting the pace of RE deployment and have dwindled offtake interest among distribution companies. These include delays in securing suitable and conflict-free land, delays in the availability of transmission equipment, uncertainty around incentives for inter-State RE plants, and complexities of grid balancing. Given these challenges, relying on polluting coal power plants may seem more tenable. However, this approach would neither be affordable nor reliable. Historical trends show that coal projects take over seven years to start operations. In comparison, RE plants, being modular, could be deployed faster and supply cheaper electricity.

How can India add renewables faster?

Scaling to 600 GW is urgent and possible with the right market signals. Below are three key strategies to unlock the pace of RE deployment in India.

First, new RE projects should be spread across more Indian States. Currently, five Indian States house three-fourths of the total RE capacity. State-agnostic reverse bids and complete waiver of inter-State transmission system (ISTS) charges have crowded investments to a few regions, putting pressure on land. The government must work with more States, like Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, and Kerala, to create a conducive RE environment. For this purpose, the ISTS waiver should not be extended beyond June 2025, barring storage plants, which would also encourage distributed RE plants under the PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) and PM Surya Ghar Scheme.

Second, the Central and State governments must promote the co-location of wind and energy storage systems with existing and new solar projects. This would help effectively utilise land and transmission networks and support grid integration of renewables. CEEW's study estimates that India will need 280 GWh of battery energy storage systems (BESS) and 100 GWh of pumped hydro storage to integrate 600 GW of RE by 2030. Here, we must prioritise BESS, which can be built within six months and is quickly becoming affordable.

Third, there is an urgent need for innovation in bidding and contract designs for faster RE procurement and RE availability in power exchanges. Several large solar and hybrid RE tenders, concluded in FY24 by intermediaries like the Solar Energy Corporation of India, did not generate offtake interest from States. The Union government must work with States to generate demand for RE procurement, devise suitable tender designs, and proactively resolve bottlenecks. Besides bilateral RE procurement, we must improve RE availability on our power exchanges. Here, the government could consider supporting a Contract-for-Difference pool that can de-risk merchant RE capacities.

India's tryst with RE has seen many successes in the last decade. Hopefully, it can also achieve the unthinkable – double the share of clean energy in its generation mix from 25% to 50% by 2030.

Disha Agarwal is senior programme lead and Shalu Agrawal is Director of Programmes at CEEW. Views are personal.

THE GIST

The summer of 2024 witnessed a 40-50% year-on-year growth in room air conditioner sales, driven by rising incomes and record-breaking temperatures. All-India peak demand crossed 250 GW on May 30, 2024, which was 6.3% higher than projections.

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BWSSB becomes India's first BIS-certified water board

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has become the first water board in India to receive certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for its piped drinking water supply management system.

The certification follows a rigorous six-month evaluation by BIS, which praised the city's adherence to international water quality standards

Six-month evaluation

The certification follows a rigorous six-month evaluation by BIS, which praised the city's adherence to international water quality standards. The BWSSB successfully met stringent criteria for efficient, safe, and sustainable water management practices, noted a statement from the Board.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who also oversees Bangalore Urban Development, hailed the achievement. "Providing clean and safe drinking water to the city's residents has always been our top priority. This certification reinforces the city's commitment to urban sustainability," said Mr. Shivakumar.

BWSSB Chairman V. Ram Prasath Manohar said the BIS certification covers all aspects of water supply, from intake and treatment to distribution and quality assurance.

The Odisha State Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
omfed
www.omfed.com
D-2, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar - 751 007
PH.No. 0674-2546030, 2540273, 2540417, 2540974
E-mail ID : omfed@yahoo.com

Adv.No.E-9067/OMFED:HRD:RECRUIT:2025 Date: 14.03.2025

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE FOR WALK IN INTERVIEW

A Walk-In Interview will be held on 02nd April, 2025 at 10.30 AM onwards to select dynamic and experienced professionals for the following contractual vacancies. The details of the Qualification, Experience, Terms of Reference and Application forms for each of these posts may be referred at OMFED website www.omfed.com.

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Post	Remarks
01	Superintendent (Powder Plant)	02	Contractual Rs 50,000 or negotiable, depending on experience and Suitability / Merit
02	Superintendent(UHT / SIG Packaging Machine)	02	Contractual Rs 50,000 or negotiable, depending on experience and Suitability / Merit
03	Superintendent (Instrumentation)	02	Contractual Rs 50,000 or negotiable, depending on experience and Suitability / Merit
04	Superintendent (Transport)	01	Contractual Rs 55,000 or negotiable, depending on experience and Suitability / Merit

OMFED Management reserves the right to cancel, effect changes or alteration in the above advertisement without assigning any reason thereof. Corrigendum, if any, will be published in the above said website.

Sd/- Managing Director
CAD-2834: OIPR-06063/11/0148/2425

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda
Vanivilas Branch,
No.69, Kanakpura Main Road,
Vasavi circle, V V puram, Basavanagudi,
Bengaluru, Karnataka-560004.
080-26614099, 26620783. Ph:9500566436

LOCKER OPEN NOTICE

This is the information of our valued patrons who have taken lockers on rent at below mentioned **Bank of Baroda, Vanivilas Branch, Bangalore** and have committed breach of agreement. The notices sent as per RBI / Bank's guidelines to the renters at their recorded addresses have been returned undelivered stating either person/s addresses not found or left. Efforts to contact the locker holders in person at their present whereabout could not be ascertained. Thus, having no alternative, the notice is given to the persons named below for contacting branch and to clear the dues of the Bank within a period of 15 days, failing which the bank will proceed to Break Open the Locker at their cost, risk and responsibility and the Bank will exercise its right to lien for recovery of outstanding rent cost and other charges.

Branch : Vanivilas

Locker Holder Name	Locker Type	Locker Number	Outstanding Balance	Break Open Date & Time
G K Stone Gallery, Proprietor: Vinay B S, No.26/1 Kodigihalli Magadi Main Road Yeshwantpura Hobli-560112.	Small	7403AX0024	Rs. 9,735/-	20.03.2025 10.30 AM

Date: 13.03.2025
Place: Bangalore
Sd/- Authorised Officer
Bank of Baroda

KARNATAK UNIVERSITY DHARWAD
D.P.A.R, Pavatenagar, Dharwad.
Phone: 0836-2215349 Website: www.kud.ac.in

No.: KU/DPAR/NT/04/2025/3157 Date: 13/03/2025

NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from eligible Candidates for the appointment of Programme Co-ordinator for NSS Unit in Karnatak University Dharwad on deputation basis for an initial period of three years. Aspirants may go through the detailed notification which has been uploaded in the University website **www.kud.ac.in** and also they can download the application form from the same segment. **The last date for submission of application is 15.04.2025.**

DIPR/Dharwad/1080/Adverto/2024-25 Sd/- REGISTRAR

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer (Project),
BBMP, Mahadevapura Zone, Bengaluru - 560036.

No: BBMP/EE(P)/MDP/TN/06/2024-25 Date: 13-03-2025

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) - (SHORT TERM)
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer (Project), Mahadevapura Zone, BBMP, Bengaluru invites item rate tenders from eligible Tenderers registered in BBMP / CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / any State or Central Government Organizations for the Works detailed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
1	Additional Construction Work on the Existing Office Building in Mahadevapura Zone. **(Others) - Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 500.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 7,50,000/-**

Calendar of Events: **1)** The Tender Documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. 2)** Last Date for Submission of Queries: **15-03-2025 upto 3.00 PM. 3)** Date and Time for Pre Bid Meeting **on 15-03-2025 at 11.00 AM. 4)** Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders: **20-03-2025 upto 5.00 PM. 5)** Date and Time for Opening of Technical / Financial Bid: **21-03-2025 at 5.00 PM.** Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Project), Mahadevapura Zone, BBMP.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

For and behalf of The President of India E-Tenders are invited by the Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Southern Railway, Salem - 636 005 for the following work.

Sl.No.	Description	Description
1	Tender Notice Number and date	**GEM/2025/B/6043045 dated 10.03.2025**
2	Name of work	Outcome Based comprehensive cleaning contract at Salem Railway Station for a period of 730 days inclusive of garbage disposal
3	Estimate Value	**Rs. 3,48,85,946/-**
4	Earnest Money	**Rs. 3,24,500/-**
5	Tender Closing date and Time	31.03.2025 at 20:00 Hrs.
6	Web address	**http://www.gem.gov.in**

The firms registered in GeM portal are only eligible to participate in this tender. For details of bid submission, please refer website portal **"http://www.gem.gov.in".**

For details about scope of work, approximate value of tender, location and other documents, please refer website portal **"http://www.gem.gov.in".**

Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderers to check any Corrigendum is issued for any correction; deletion or modifications uploaded subsequently in the website and the same shall be taken into account while uploading the tender. For further details please visit website at **"http://www.gem.gov.in".**

Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer
Southern Railway, Salem - 636 005

Government of Karnataka
Shivamogga Institute of Medical Sciences
An Autonomous Institute of Medical Sciences, Sagar Road,
Shivamogga - 577 201. Phone : 08182 269700/269701,
FAX :08182 264700, Website : **www.sims.karnataka.gov.in**

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e-procurement)

No :SIMS/Store/Tender/2024-25 ದಿನಾಂಕ : 12.03.2025

SIMS Invites Tenders through E-procurement (KPP Portal) with two cover system.

SI NO	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Item	Date of Bid documents available	Opening of Technical Bid
1	No. SIMS/CVL/MIS/ 1/MCW-SIMS-SMG, Dated: 13.03.2025	Purchase of Consumables to Super Speciality Hospital, SIMS.	13.03.2025 to 27.03.2025	29.03.2025
2	No. SIMS/Store/TNDR/ Lab Chemical & Re Agents/2024-25/ SIMS-SMG, Dated: 13.03.2025	Purchase of Chemical & Re Agents to VRDL Lab and Mc Gann Teaching Hospital, SIMS.	13.03.2025 to 27.03.2025	29.03.2025
3	SIMS/EST/OSSB/5/2025-EST1-SIMS-SMG, (DME/ 2024-25/SE0393) dated: 12-03-2025	Providing Group D Manpower Services to SIMS	12.03.2025 to 26.03.2025	28.03.2025

The tenders can be obtained through e-procurement (KPP Portal) from the tendering website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Director/Dean
DIPR/SMG/No-99-03/zenkar/2024-25 Shivamogga Institute of Medical Sciences, Shivamogga

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Notice for general public

A temporary diversion road at Level Crossing number 18 at Railway kilometer 34/700-800 on State Highway 137, Annigeri - Navalgund Road near Annigeri for construction of Road Over Bridge is ready. The traffic near the Level Crossing will be diverted over this diversion road until the construction of Road Over Bridge is completed. Temporary diversion road is ready for commissioning and diverting road traffic in both directions from 10.03.2025.

Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/ General/Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/849/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is given on behalf of my client Mr. Dinesh Mathew Joseph that the property described in the schedule hereunder is purchased by my Client. The original sale deed of the Vendor namely Mr. Yassir S/o Sri. M. Pakran was handed over to my Client, vide Doc No ANK-1-01844/2004 - 2005, stored in CD No ANKD 19, Pages 1 to 12, dated 07-05-2004, registered before the Sub Registrar Anekal, Bangalore has been lost/misplaced

My Client has lodged a police complaint in Hebbagodi Police Station dated 12/03/2025. Anybody having received the said documents kindly inform the undersigned within a period of 15 days of the paper publication. In case if the said documents are mortgaged/misused, my Client shall not be held responsible.

SCHEDULE

Residential Apartment bearing No **AF 12** in **First Floor in Block "A" of "ITTINA NEELA"**, **measuring 880 Sq. ft** of super built up area inclusive of proportionate share in common areas measuring **264 Sq ft,** situated at Andhapura Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District.

Sd/- **Nanaiah N S,** Advocate
Off: No.27/B, Deccan Palms,
Ananthnagar Phase II, Electronic City,
Bangalore-560100. Date : 14-03-2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client intends to purchase the properties mentioned in the Item No.1 to 6 in the Schedule hereunder hereinafter collectively referred to as Schedule Property from its Owner, **KRISHNAPRIYA REALITY LLP,** a limited Partnership Firm, Represented by its Partner Sri. Avnash Amarlal, registered office at No.100/1, City Center Building Opposite Town Hall,J C Road, Bengaluru – 560 002. The Owners represent that there are no other person/s having any right, title, interest, claims or minor's claims, share, etc., of whatsoever nature over the Schedule Property. The Owners have not mortgaged, created charge, sold, transferred, created any lien or encumbered the Schedule Property or part thereof in any manner. It is further represented that the Owners have not entered into any Agreement of Sale / Development Agreement / Memorandum of Understanding / Arrangement etc. and have not executed any power of attorney in favour of any person/s with respect to the Schedule Property or part thereof. If any person/s having any objection/s or claims with respect to the sale and transfer of the Schedule Property shall with documentary evidence lodge their objection/claim within **10 days** from the date of this notice with the Undersigned, failing which, my client shall proceed with the above-mentioned transaction and claim/s if any shall be deemed to have been waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of agricultural lands all situated at **Udayagiri Village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District, Bengaluru.**

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent	Boundaries			
			East	West	North	South
1.	56	1 Acre 14 Guntas (Excluding 1 gunta Karab)	Property belonging to Mr. Subramanaiah	Property bearing Sy No. 57 belonging to Mrs. Nagarathnamma and others	Property bearing Sy No. 62 belonging to Mrs. Nagarathnamma and others	Property belonging to Mr. Goplakrishnaiah
2.	57/1	19 Guntas (Excluding 1 gunta Karab)	Property bearing Sy No. 56 belonging to Mr. Krishnamurthy and Mr. C. Navaneeth.	Property belonging to Mr. Vishweshwaraiah	Property belonging to Mr. Padmanabhaiah and M. RamaKrishnaiah.	Property bearing Sy No. 57/2 belonging to Mrs. Nagarathnamma.
3.	57/2	33 Guntas	Property bearing Sy No. 56 belonging to Mr. Krishnamurthy and Mr. C. Navaneeth.	Property belonging to Mr. Vishweshwaraiah	Property bearing Sy No. 57/1	Property belonging to Mrs. Padavathamma.
4.	58/2	9 ¾ guntas (Excluding 1/2 gunta Karab	Property bearing Sy No.57/1	Property bearing Sy No.58	Property bearing Sy No.52/1	Property bearing Sy No.58
5.	59	1 Acre 10 Guntas (Excluding 1 gunta Karab)	Property bearing Sy No.58.	Property bearing Sy No.60.	Property bearing Sy No.61.	Property bearing Sy No.52.
6.	63/1	29 Guntas (Excluding 1 gunta Karab)	Land in Sy No.63 belonging to Mr. Gopala Krishna	Bhuvanahalli	Bhuvanahalli	Land in Sy No.62 belonging to children of Mrs. Lakshminarasamma

Shri. Satish. R.
Advocate,
No.68, PH-2, TLVA, Electronic City,
Bengaluru- 560 100 Mobile : 9886720139
Bengaluru Dated : 14/03/2025

CAUVERY NEERAVARI NIGAMA NIYAMITHA
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)
Executive Engineer, K.R.Sagara Division, K.R. Sagara

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO - 09/2024-25 Dated : 13-03-2025

The Executive Engineer, K.R. Sagara Division, K.R.Sagara, Srirangapatna Taluk, Mandya Dist. on behalf of the Managing Director CNNL Mysore has invited tender through e-procurement **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** for 2 No. of works Amounting from Rs. 419.25 Lakhs and Rs. 23.65 Lakhs and on EMD As per KPPP Portal. Any further information Or Clarification for the above said work including last date, opening date, Pre-bid meeting date, EMD, etc., can be obtained from above mentioned office during the office hours & from the above said website.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
K.R. Sagara Division, K.R. Sagara.

Ph.: 06814-295053; (E-mail) : dgp_nac@yahoo.com
NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, DIGAPAHANDI
GANJAM, ODISHA, PIN - 761012

Letter No: 564 /DIGNAC **CORRIGENDUM** Date:13.03.25

Due to some unavoidable circumstances, the E-Procurement Notice No: 488/ DIGNAC Dtd:06/03/2025 published in the "https://tendersorissa.gov.in" vide Bid Identification No: DIGNAC-05/2024-25 and TENDER ID-2025_ORULB_111252, now the contents shall be read as detailed below.

SL NO	PARTICULARS	PUBLISHED (ONLINE) IN DTCN AS	SHALL BE READ AS
01	5. Evaluation Criteria Table 1: Evaluation Criteria 1.Turnover - Average annual turnover (Three years not before 2020-2021)	Maximum Mark 01. 10 Mark	Maximum Mark 01. 20 Mark
	5. Technical Presentation (A) Approach & methodology	Technical Presentation Maximum Mark : 40 01. 20 Mark	Technical Presentation Maximum Mark : 30 01. 10 Mark
02	04. Eligibility Criteria General	• Should be registered under the Indian Societies Act / Indian Trust Act / Indian Religious and Charitable Trusts Act / or as a not-for-profit Company under the Companies Act or the relevant state Acts for at least five years as on the 31st March 2023. The detailed should be submitted with the Technical bid of tender document with self-attestation.	• Should be registered under the Indian Societies Act / Indian Trust Act / Indian Religious and Charitable Trusts Act / Agency or as a not-for-profit Company under the Companies Act or the relevant state Acts for at least five years as on the 31st March 2023. The detailed should be submitted with the Technical bid of tender document with self-attestation.

C-1872 Executive Officer, NAC, Digapahandi, Ganjam OIPR-13117/11/0015/2425

TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BELUR-573115, HASSAN
E-mail: itstaff_ulb_belur@yahoo.co.in,
townmunicipal.belur@gmail.com ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08177–222221
No. TMC/JE/TENDER-08/2024-25 Dated: 10.03.2025

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sl. No.Name of work 1)DMA/2024-25/RD/WORK_INDENT34931 Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)71,72,020-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)1,43,500-00 2)DMA/2024-25/BD/WORK_INDENT36017 (Reserved for CAT-II(A) Category Contractor) Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)42,16,986-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)84,500-00 3)DMA/2024-25/RD/WORK_INDENT36019 Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)16,76,436-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)41,950-00 4)DMA/2024-25/EL/WORK_INDENT36023 (Reserved for SC Category Contractor) Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)16,82,345-00 EMD (Rs.In Lakhs)25,240-00 5)DMA/2024-25/RD/WORK_INDENT 34812 Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)55,35,572-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)1,10,750-00 6)DMA/2024-25/RD/WORK_INDENT 34810 (Reserved for ST Category Contractor) Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)81,28,339-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)1,21,930-00 7)DMA/2024-25/RD/WORK_INDENT34806 (Reserved for CAT-I Category Contractor) Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)80,17,645-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)1,60,500-00 8)DMA/2024-25/RD/WORK_INDENT34797 Tender amount (Rs. In Lakhs)38,11,710-00 EMD (Rs. In Lakhs)76,300-00 1)Last date and time for tender notification in E-procurement: 21.03.2025 upto 5.30pm. 2)Techinical bid opening date and time: 24.03.2025 at 11.00am 3)Financial bid opening date and time: 27.03.2025 at 11.00am

Sd/- Ashok.A.R President, TMC, Belur. Sd/- Sujay Kumar S M, Chief Officer, TMC, Belur.

ಮಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/1053/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2024–25

TAMILNADU CEMENTS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU UNDERTAKING)
5th Floor, Aavin Illam, No.3A, Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Salai, Nandanam, Chennai- 35.

e-Tender notice

e- Tender Ref.No:63/2024-25, Transportation of Chemical Gypsum through open trucks from M/s. Greenstar Fertilizers Ltd., (SPIC), Tuticorin to Ariyalur Cement Works, Ariyalur District on Rate Contract Basis.
Est. Value : Rs.**4.81 Crore**, EMD : Rs.**4,00,000/-**
Submission of tender : Up to 12.00 Noon on 15-04-2025.
Important Note:
A pre-bid meeting will be held on 25-03-2025 at 3.00 pm at TANCEM, Registered Office, 5th Floor, Aavin Illam, No.3A, Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Salai, Nandanam, Chennai – 600 035.
The Tender document can be downloaded from https://tntenders.gov.in Corrigendum / Addendum to this publication, if any would appear only on the above said website.

DIPR/1022/TENDER/2025 GENERAL MANAGER (MARKETING)/DRO

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that our Client intends to enter into a contract for the below mentioned Schedule Properties from its respective owners of the survey numbers all situated at **Doddamallekere Village, Tondebavi Hobli, Gauribidanur Taluk, Chikkaballapur District** of the Schedule Properties **("Owners").**

The Owners have represented that they are the absolute owners of their survey numbers of the Schedule Properties and are in possession of the same and the Schedule Properties are free from any kind of encumbrance, suits, proceedings under any statute. Any person or persons asserting any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in the Schedule Properties or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, gift, inheritance, bequest, possession, lis pendens, maintenance, easement, memorandum of understanding, agreement, power of attorney, option, right of first refusal, pre-emption or otherwise whatsoever is hereby required to notify the same in writing to the undersigned within a period of **Seven (7) days** from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof thereof failing which our Client will treat the title of the Schedule Properties as clear and marketable and will proceed to enter into the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTIES

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Acre	Guntas	Name of the Owner / Khatedar	Boundaries			
					East	West	North	South
01.	28	12	20	(i) Mr. Syed Mohammed Irfan aged about 37 years son of Late Mr. Mir Izzath Ali resident of Alipura Village, Thondebhavi Hobli, Gauribi danur Taluk, Chikkaba llapura District. (ii) Mr. Abdul Rashid aged about 62 years son of Mr. Mohamm ed Basheer, Residing at No. 394, 4th Floor, 2nd Block, 2nd A Main, HBR Layout, Kalyannagar, Bengaluru – 560043.	Sy.No. 29	Sy.No. 40	Sy.Nos 33, 35 and 39	Sy.Nos. 27, 109 and 112.
02.	29/1	1	16	Mr. P. G. Ravishankar Babuaged about 52 years, son of Late Mr. P.V. Gurumurthy Setty, Residing at No. 2110/119, CMC Ward No.15, NanjappaBadavane, Abhilash Layout, Gauribidanur City, Gauribidanur Taluk, Chikkaballapura District – 561 208.	Sy.No. 20	Sy.No. 28	Sy.Nos. 19, 30, 32 & 33	Sy.No. 29/2.
03.	29/3	1	09		Sy.No. 20	Sy.No. 29/4	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25.
04.	29/4	0	12		Sy.No. 29/3	Sy.No. 29/5	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25
05.	29/5	0	17		Sy.No. 29/4	Sy.No. 29/6	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25
06.	29/6	0	22		Sy.No. 29/5	Sy.No. 29/7	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25
07.	29/2	1	39	(i) Mr. Syed Abbas aged about 55 years, son of Late Mr. Mir Izzath Ali resident at Alipura Village, Thondebhavi Hobli, Gauribidanur Taluk, Chikkaballapur District – 561 213. (ii) Mr. Mir Gulam Hussain aged about 62 years, son of Mr. Mir Karar Hussain residing at No. 55/5, South Cross Street, Neelasandra, Viveknagar Bangalore South, Bangalore – 560047.	Sy.No. 20	Sy.No. 28	Sy.No. 29/1	Sy.No. 29
08.	29/7	0	16	(i) Mr. Sipthain Raza aged about 57 years, son of Late Mr. Meer Ayub Hussain, Resident at Alipura Village, Thondebhavi Hobli, Gauribi danur Taluk, Chikkaballapur District. (ii) Mr. Mir Asif Ali aged about 61 years, son of Mr. Mir Hamza Hussain residing at No. 55/5, South Cross Street, Neelasandra, Viveknagar Bangalore South, Bangalore – 560 047.	Sy.No. 29/6	Sy.No. 29/8	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25
09.	29/8	0	13		Sy.No. 29/7	Sy.No. 29/9	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25
10.	29/9	0	33		Sy.No. 29/8	Sy.No. 29/10	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 25
11.	29/10	0	26	Mr. Syed Sameer Raza, Aged about 49 years, son of Late Mr. Syed Akram Raza residing at No. 301, Charu Jasmine, 3/12 Leonard Lane, Opp to Axis Bank ATM, Richmond Town, Bangalore North, Bangalore – 560 025.	Sy.No. 29/9	Sy.Nos. 28, 29/11 and 29/12	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 29/9
12.	29/11	0	18		Sy.No. 29/10	Sy.No. 28,	Sy.No. 29/2	Sy.No. 29/12
13.	29/12	0	32		Sy.No. 29/10	Sy.No. 28,	Sy.No. 29/11	Sy.No. 29/10

Sadananda P Naganur
Sadananda & Co., Legal Consultant
54/1, Central Street, Off 8th Cross, Kumara Park West,
Bengaluru-560 020 Phone : 9880484236

OFFICE OF THE PCCF (WILDLIFE) & CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN, ODISHA, FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT, GOVT OF ODISHA

EOI FOR SOLAR-POWERED EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Wildlife Odisha invites EOIs from qualified firms & technology providers for the design, supply, installation, and maintenance of solar-powered Early Warning System (EWS) to mitigate human-elephant conflict.

The EOI details can be found in the website link below:

https://wildlife.odisha.gov.in

The Last Date of submission of the EOI :

24TH MARCH 2025

The detailed EOI can either be sent via email :
wildlifeodisha@gmail.com

OR

Via hardcopy in the Postal Address given below:

Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Prakruti Bhawan, Plot No - 1459, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar - 751007, Odisha

MM- OIPR-08006/11/0005/2425

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

Fond Remembrance

DEEPA KRISHNAN
14.03.2001

You are very special Sweet Deepu
To everyone who knew you
The number of lives you have touched
The ways you reached out to others
The great memories you left behind
Are all reasons to be proud of
Its hard to imagine a richer
And more fulfilling life than yours
No wonder you are loved more
With every passing year
With a heart full of gratitude
We remember the times we have shared
Your vacant place no one can fill
We miss you now and always will
With all our love –

Sarala, Krishnan, Rajiv, Divya, Shyam

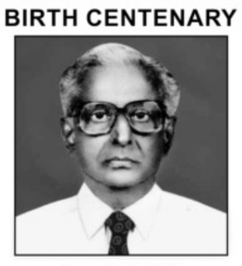
DEATH

Aum Sri Sairam

S.SANKAR FCA (81 years)
Pudukkottai reached the Lotus Feet of Bhagawan Baba on 06.03.2025. 10th day ceremony on 15.03.2025 and 13th day ceremony on 18.03.2025.
Bereaved by
Smt. Radhika Sankar,
S. Ashok Sundaresan CA and
S. Balaji Subramanian CA
Contact : 9842460003

BIRTH CENTENARY

BIRTH CENTENARY



KAMAKOTI CHANDRASEKHARAN
(INDIAN AIRLINES)
14.03.1925 - 23.08.1995

Fondly remembered for your affectionate, helpful, humble, giving and kind hearted nature. Seeking your blessings.

Daughters, Sons-in-law
Grandchildren,
Great-grandchildren,
Nephews and Nieces.

Ph : 9445128413

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PERSONAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

I, KANNOLY Vijayan S/o Late M. Achuthan Nair, residing at 330, Anand Somu Pristine, Gollahalli, Anjanapura, Bengaluru-560108, do hereby declare that my names Kannoly Vijayan & K. Vijayan, both belong to me only. Henceforth, I shall be known and called as Kannoly Vijayan for all legal purposes, vide Affidavit dated 11-03-2025 sworn before Notary, Mr. L. Puttaraju, Bengaluru-560078

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
We, **THYAGARAJ HENNUR NANJUNDAPPA and SAVITHRI THAMMANNA,** Residing at NO.309, HENNUR CROSS, OPP HENNUR OLD POLICE STATION, HENNUR MAIN ROAD, KALYAN NAGAR, BENGALURU NORTH, BENGALURU-560043, KARNATAKA, declare that we have changed the name of our Minor Daughter from **GANASHRI THYAGARAJ** (Old Name) to **GANASHRI GOWDA T** (New Name), henceforth our Daughter shall be known and called as **GANASHRI GOWDA T** (New Name) for all her personal, official & legal purpose, vide Affidavit dated : 11/03/2025 before Notary **GANGARAJU .B.N.** at BENGALURU.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHARFOON** (NAME BEFORE MARRIAGE / OLD NAME), Daughter of LATE AASAN SAB & Mrs. MAMTAJ, Wife of Mr.S.PRABHU, aged 46 years, Residing at NO. 16, 3RD CROSS, NEAR MARIAMMA TEMPLE, SUDHAMNAGAR, BENGALURU NORTH, BENGALURU-560075, declare that I have changed and retained my name from **SHRIMATHI LAKSHMI** (NAME OF AFTER MARRIAGE / CURRENT NAME) to **SHARFOON** (NAME BEFORE MARRIAGE / OLD NAME), henceforth I shall be known and called as **SHARFOON** (New Name) for all my personal, Aadhaar Card, Pan, official & legal purpose, vide Affidavit dated : 11/03/2025 before Notary **MOHAMED ARSHED AHMED,** at BENGALURU

AFFIDAVIT
I, **ARAVINDHAN M,** S/o Madhivanan, age 43 years, R/o No. 26/2, Behind Hanuman Temple, Kotiganahalli Village, Handenahalli Post, Sarjapura, Bangalore-562 125 do hereby declare that both the names i.e. **ARAVINDHAN MATHIVANAN** and **ARAVINDHAN M** are one and the same and refers to me only, also both the names of my father i.e. **MATHIVANAN** and **MADHIVANAN** are one and the same and refers to my father only, henceforth my father name will be known and called as **MADHIVANAN** and my name will be known and called as **ARAVINDHAN M** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 12/03/2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **ROOPA G. BHANDARE** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **N.JOSHUA,** S/o Late Nanda Gopal, aged about 55 years, R/at No. 1, 16th Cross, Gayathri Layout, Basavanapura Main Road, Near Mayur Bakery, Devasandra, Bengaluru-560 036, Karnataka, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **RADHAKRISHNAN** to **N. JOSHUA,** henceforth I shall be known and called as **N. JOSHUA** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 12th March 2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **D. GUNA SHEKAR** at Bangalore.

PULSE-CHECK

For representative purposes. GETTY IMAGES

Understanding the neurobiological basis of substance abuse addiction

The human brain is perhaps the most complex living structure in the universe. Recent findings reveal that addiction is not isolated to discrete brain regions but rather involves a unified circuit encompassing areas associated with craving, emotional regulation, and decision-making processes

Baby Chakrapani P. S.

In the complex landscape of public health challenges, substance use disorders stand as a testament to the intricate relationship between the brain and behaviour. As Brain Awareness Week (March 10-16) brings neuroscience into focus, it becomes imperative to examine addiction not merely as a moral failing but also as a chronic brain condition with neurobiological underpinnings that can be understood, treated, and potentially reversed.

Revelations from a new study

The human brain, with around 86-100 billion neurons, represents perhaps the most complex living structure in the known universe. Each neuron, equipped with an axon, dendrites, and a cell body, forms an elaborate communication network that regulates everything from basic bodily functions to complex cognitive processes. This communication occurs through neurotransmitters – chemical messengers that can either excite or inhibit neural activity.

Recent advances in neuroscience have illuminated how specific neural networks become disrupted during addiction.

The ground breaking multi-centre study by Dr. Michael D. Fox and Dr. Jacob L. Stubbs at the University of British Columbia, published in *Nature Mental Health*, analysed data from 144 imaging studies involving over 9,000 participants. Their findings reveal that addiction is not isolated to discrete brain regions but rather involves a unified circuit encompassing areas associated with craving, emotional regulation, and decision-making processes.

This discovery marks a paradigm shift in our understanding of addiction. Rather than focusing on isolated brain regions, research suggests a more holistic approach is necessary – one that considers the interconnected nature of neural pathways involved in substance use disorders.

Three interconnected brain regions emerge as central players in the development and maintenance of addiction – the basal ganglia, the extended amygdala, and the prefrontal cortex. Each contributes uniquely to what researchers describe as the three-stage cycle of addiction: binge or intoxication, withdrawal, and preoccupation or anticipation.

The basal ganglia, particularly the nucleus accumbens (NAc), plays a decisive role in processing rewards. This region teaches the brain to repeat activities that produce pleasure, whether derived from food, social interaction, or addictive substances. Working in close coordination with neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin, the NAc reinforces behaviours that "feel good" – a natural mechanism that becomes hijacked during addiction.

Meanwhile, the extended amygdala governs stress responses and the negative emotional states that accompany withdrawal from substances. This region helps explain why discontinuing substance use often leads to profound feelings of anxiety, irritability, and unease – symptoms that drive continued use despite negative consequences.

The prefrontal cortex, responsible for executive functions such as decision-making, time management, and prioritisation, completes this triad. Impairment in this region helps explain the seeming irrationality of continued substance use despite awareness of harmful consequences –a hallmark of addiction.

Vulnerability of the brain

Adolescence represents a critical "at-risk period" for substance use and addiction. During this developmental stage, the brain undergoes significant reorganisation, with the prefrontal cortex – the region responsible for impulse control and rational decision making – being among the last areas to fully mature. This neurobiological reality helps explain why adolescents are particularly vulnerable to substance use disorders and why early intervention is crucial.

The neuroadaptations that occur with ongoing substance use not only impair brain function but accelerate the transition from controlled to compulsive use. Perhaps most concerning is that these alterations may persist long after substance use ceases, contributing to relapse vulnerability and periodic cravings even after prolonged periods of abstinence.

Beyond simplistic narratives

It is essential to recognise that while substance use can lead to addiction, it does not inevitably do so on its own. A complex interplay of genetic predisposition, psychological history, environmental factors, and the age of first-use determines individual vulnerability.

This multifactorial understanding challenges simplistic narratives and underscores the need for more nuanced approaches to prevention and treatment. The scientific community has made significant strides in understanding addiction through animal models, which provide controlled conditions for examining how substances affect the brain. These studies have elucidated the impact of genes, developmental processes, and environmental factors on substance-taking behaviour. Human studies using brain imaging technologies like MRI and PET scans have further illuminated the biochemical, functional, and structural changes induced by substance use.

However, despite these advances, our understanding of how the brain changes during recovery remains incomplete. What factors support or hinder long-term recovery from substance use disorders? What neurobiological processes allow individuals to sustain behavioural changes and build resilience against relapse? These questions represent the frontier of addiction research.

A deeper comprehension of the recovery process will undoubtedly influence the development of more effective treatment and support programs. It may also help address the broader social, educational, and professional functioning challenges that often accompany substance use disorders.

The path ahead

Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of neurobiological research on addiction has been its role in reducing stigma. By framing addiction as a chronic brain condition rather than a moral weakness, this research has encouraged the integration of substance use disorder treatment into mainstream healthcare. Clinical trials continue to explore effective medications for various substance use disorders, with promising developments, particularly in the realm of opioid addiction. As our understanding of the neurobiological basis of addiction evolves, so too will our treatment approaches, potentially leading to more targeted interventions that address the specific neural circuits disrupted in addiction.

As we observe Brain Awareness Week, it behoves us to reflect on how neuroscientific insights can inform public policy, treatment approaches, and societal attitudes toward addiction. Embracing a neurobiological framework, we can move beyond simplistic blame narratives toward more compassionate and effective responses.

The brain's remarkable plasticity – its ability to reorganise and adapt –offers hope even in the face of addiction's persistent challenges. With continued research, improved public understanding, and evidence-based interventions, we can work toward a future where substance use disorders are prevented where possible and treated effectively where necessary.

In this endeavour, we must remember that behind every statistic and brain scan lies a human being – someone whose neural circuitry has been altered but whose capacity for recovery remains. This is fundamental in guiding our scientific inquiry, clinical practice, and public discourse on addiction.

The writer is a neuroscientist, Director of the Centre of Excellence in Neurodegeneration and Brain Health, and Director, Centre for Neuroscience at Cochin University of Science and Technology.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian Upendran

"Ganesh has a mania for dogs."

"I thought Ganesh didn't like dogs."

"He hates them. He's so scared of them that the other day..."

"...in that case, Ganesh doesn't have a 'mania' for dogs, he has a 'phobia' about them."

"Phobia! What does it mean?"

"A 'phobia' is 'an irrational fear or hatred of something'. For example, my mother has a phobia about dust."

"Meaning she hates dust, I suppose. Can I say, 'I have a phobia about tests?"

"You can. But remember, the stress is on the first syllable 'pho' and it rhymes with the words 'go', 'so' and 'no'."

"I see. And what does 'mania' mean?"

"It's MAnia. The 'a' in the first syllable sounds like 'a' in 'may', 'hay' and 'pay'. And if you have a mania for something..."

"...it probably means you have a strong liking for something."

"You're right. But the word can be used to indicate amusement or disapproval. For example, 'The chairman has a mania for pink shirts.' 'Savithri has a mania for horror films'."

"She certainly does. I ran after her at the supermarket today." '

"What was so important that you had to run after her?"

"Nothing. She was there and I was there. And we met by chance."

"In that case, you didn't 'run after her' but 'ran into her'. When you 'run after' someone or something 'you chase them in order to catch them or stop them.' For example, the policeman ran after the thief."

"The fielder ran after the ball."

"A very good example. When you 'run into' someone, you meet them quite unexpectedly'."

"I ran into my cousin on Sunday."

"My mother ran into Madhuri Dixit at the museum."

"Really?"

"Don't get excited. That was just an example. If my mother had run across Madhuri, don't you think I would have told you?"

"Well, one never knows with you. Remember... Hey, wait a minute! Did you say 'run across' or 'run into'?"

" 'Run across' and 'run into' mean the same thing. For example. I can either say, "I keep running across some of my old teachers at the library" or "I keep running into some of my old teachers at the library'."

"When do you think I'll run across Madhuri?"

"You have Madhuri mania. You know that?"

"The entire country has that mania right now!"

Published in The Hindu on October 2, 1995.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of India's only hockey World Cup triumph

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1

In which Asian capital city was the third edition of the World Cup held and how many teams took part?

QUESTION 2

What was India's performance in the first two World Cups held in Spain and the Netherlands?

QUESTION 3

Which were the lone South American and African teams in India's group in the league stages?

QUESTION 4

Who were the skipper and the coach of the triumphant Indian squad?

QUESTION 5

India topped its pool and played host to Malaysia in the semifinals. It was four minutes away from a 2-1 defeat when an Olympic medalist and a future MP equalised before India won in extra time. Name the outspoken hockey star.

QUESTION 6

India took on 'arch-rival' and defending champion Pakistan in the summit clash where it prevailed 2-1 to take the honours. Who netted the match-winner? Name his legendary father as well.

Visual question:

On the left is a legendary Olympian, who was the manager of the victorious team, and on the right the then president of the Indian hockey federation and a noted sports administrator. Name both. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Questions and Answers to the March 12 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The 1983 Cricket World Cup in which India registered its first ever win was also known by this name. **Ans: Prudential Cup '83, West Indies**

2. In this tournament, India won the cup defeating Pakistan in the finals. **Ans: 2007 World Twenty20**

3. The 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup was hosted by India and these countries. This player was declared player of the tournament. **Ans: Sri Lanka and Bangladesh; Yuvraj Singh**

4. In this tournament, during the semi-final between India and Sri Lanka in England, individuals, ran onto the pitch with flags of Tamil Eelam. **Ans: 2013 ICC Champions Trophy**

5. The 2024 Men's T20 World Cup was the first major ICC tournament to include matches played in this country. This player took the most number of wickets in the tournament. **Ans: The U.S.; Arshdeep Singh**

6. This player scored the most number of runs in the recently-concluded 2025 ICC Champions Trophy. **Ans: Rachin Ravindra**

Visual: Identify the tournament from this image. **Ans: The 2002 ICC Champions Trophy; India and Sri Lanka both were declared winners as the match was abandoned due to rain**

Early Birds: Mohan Lal Patel| Tamal Biswas| Parimal Das| Arun Kumar Singh| Dodo Jayaditya

Word of the day

Petty:
inferior in rank or status; small and of little importance; contemptibly narrow in outlook

Synonyms: fiddling, little, trivial, small-minded

Usage: *His petty comments cost him his friendship.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/pettypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈpɛt.i/, [ˈpʰɛr.i]

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby notified that on behalf of our Client, we are scrutinizing the right, title and interest of current owner's i.e. **Smt.Geethamma, Sri.BabuReddy, Sri.Ravi, Sri.Ashok Reddy & Sri.Venkatesh,** to the Immovable property with Survey No.58/2A, 58/1C, 58/1B & 59/1C, located in Gottigere Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru District-560076 more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder and referred to herein as the 'Schedule Property'. The Owner has represented that they are currently the sole and absolute owners of the Schedule Property, having unrestricted rights of alienation over the same. The Owner has further represented that the Schedule Property is free from all encumbrances, charges, lien, litigation and/ or any other third-party notes/ claims of any nature whatsoever Notice is hereby given to the general public that if any person's, entity. company, firm or institution has any claims or asserts any right, title, or interest by way of sale, lease, mortgage, charge, lien, easement, agency, license, gift Inheritance, share, possession, assignment. right of prescription or pre-emption or under any agreement or other disposition or under any suit, decree, injunction order or attachment or award passed by any court or authority, legation, lispendens, decree or order of any adjudicating authority, exchange, partition, power of attorney, will, bequest, tenancy, development rights, family arrangement/ settlement, allotment, acquisition, requisition, FAR/FSI, beneficial right & interest under any trust, claim, demand or any other interest of whatsoever nature in or upon the Schedule Property or any part thereof, the same may be brought to the notice of the undersigned, in writing, together vim as details and documents in support of such claim, within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of this Notice, failing which it shall be conclusively presumed and deemed that the Owner has a clear and marketable tile to the Schedule Property and that none else has any right, title, interest or claim whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property; and our Client would be at liberty to proceed to enter Into and complete the intended transaction in respect of the Schedule Property Any objections and/or claims received after the expiry of the notice period mentioned above shall neither be entertained nor be binding on our Client

SCHEDULE PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of Agricultural Residential converted land bearing Survey No's. 58/2A having 0.22 Gunta, Sy.No.58/1C having 0.16 Gunta, Sy.No.58/1B having 0.14 Gunta & Sy.No.59/1C having 0.09 Gunta and bounded on: **Sy.No.58/2A having 0.22 Gunta,** East by: Road, West by: Thimma Reddy Land, North by: Own Land & Venkatappa Land, South by: Srinivas Reddy Land & Honnappa Land. **Sy.No.58/1B having 0.14 Gunta,** East by: Own Land & Thimmappa Reddy land, West by: Thimmappa Reddy land, North by: Other persons Land, South by: Own Land. **Sy.No.58/1C having 0.16 Gunta,** East by: Nallappa Land, West by: Raja Kaluve Canal, North by: Venkatappa Land, South by: Own Land & Thimmappa Reddy land. **Sy.No.59/1C having 0.09 Gunta,** East by: Own Land, West by: Thimmappa Reddy land, North by: Other persons Land, South by: Own Land.

For any queries regarding the land, please contact: 8105977899/9900089306.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 12.03.2025

Gagan Naveen, Advocate
R/at P.B.No.7611, 7th Mile, Bannerghatta Road, Arekere, Bengaluru-560076

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Public Works Department
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi

No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-1/TENDER/2024-25/5999 DATE: 12/03/2025

Short Term E-Tender Notification (Call-1 & Call-2)

Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise short term e-Tender/retenders from Eligible registered contractors for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 5 works under head of account 5054-MDR Improvements and 1 work under head of account 5054-MDR Renewals, Totally 6 No. of works, Amount put to tender is minimum of Rs. 60.00 Lakhs and Maximum of Rs. 240.00 Lakhs.

Calendar of events for the works at Sl No. 1 & 3 to 6: 1)Pre-bid meeting date: 24-03-2025 at 11.00 AM, at The O/o the under signed. 2)Last date for queries & clarifications:25-03-2025 up to 5.30 PM, 3)Last Date of Receipt of Bids:27-03-2025 up to 5.00 PM, 4)Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 29-03-2025 at 4.30 PM, 5)Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 6) If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

Calendar of events for the work at Sl No. 2: 1)Pre-bid meeting date: 26-03-2025 at 11.00 AM, at The O/o the under signed. 2)Last date for queries & clarifications : 27-03-2025 up to 5.30 PM, 3)Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 29-03-2025 up to 5.00 PM, 4)Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 01-04-2025 at 4.30 PM, 5)Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 6)If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in & departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept.,Division Chikkodi during working hours.

Sd/-Executive Engineer,
PWD. Chikodi Division, Chikodi

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1909/KSMCA/2024-25

STATE BANK OF INDIA
Stressed Assets Management Branch, (SAMB) Bengaluru

Authorized Officer's Details:
Name: Sri. Krishnamurthy C.
E-mail Id: sbi.04209@sbi.co.in
Mobile No: 8008572034
Land Line No. (Office): 080-25943484

Address of the Branch: 2nd Floor, Office Complex Building, SBI LHO Campus, No. 65, St. Mark's Road, Bengaluru -560 001
Contact: Sri Prashanth Varma - Mb: 9620432064
Telephone: 080 -25943480,
E-mail Id: sbi.04209@sbi.co.in

APPENDIX –II A & IVA
[See proviso to Rule 6(2) & 8(6)]
E AUCTION SALE ON 16.04.2025

Sale of Properties (Movables & Immovable Assets) Charged/Hypothecated/Mortgaged to the Bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Provison to Rule 6(2), 8(6) And 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

The undersigned as Authorised Officer of State Bank of India has taken symbolic possession of property under section 13(4) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and the Borrower– **M/s Shankar Mall & M/s Shankar Rice Industries** and Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular that the below described properties hypothecated/ mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is"** basis, on **16.04.2025** for recovery of **Rs.128,85,47,551/-** (Rupees One hundred Twenty Eight Crore Eighty Five Lakhs Forty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Fifty One Only) as on 16.01.2025 and further interest at contractual rate from 17.01.2025 with incidental expenses, costs, charges etc., due to the State Bank of India and Canara Bank, Secured Creditors, from Borrower, **M/s. Shankar Mall & M/s Shankar Rice Industries,** 4309/32, Sira Road, Sira Gate, Tumkur-572101, **AND** Guarantors/Mortgagor,**(1) T K Nagarajasetty** (Partner), S/o G B Krishnaiah. Residing at #89, 1st Cross, J C ROAD, Vinayaka nagar, Someswarapuram, Tumkur, Karnataka-572102, **(2) T K Ramesh babu** (Partner) S/o Krishnasetty G B. No. 1 Isiri Vasavi Nagar Behind Mahaveera Jaina Temple, opp Anikethan Mandira Sira Gate, Tumkur, Karnataka-572101 **(3) G N Vinod** (Partner) S/o T K Nagaraja settee. Tulasi 2nd main 1st cross, opp DC Bunglow Siragate Vasavinagar, Tumkur, Karnataka-572106, **(4) G N Vivek** (Partner) S/o T K Nagarajashetty. # 89, 1st Cross, J C ROAD, Vinayaka nagar, Someswarapuram, Tumkur, Karnataka-572102 **(5) K S Shankar** (Partner) S/O Satyanarayana Nanjundashetty Kadaba. Nanjundeshwara Nilya, C S I Layout, 2nd Cross, Tumkur, Karnataka-572102.

The Reserve Price, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Bid Increment amount, Time & Date of e-Auction and last date for submission of EMD along with KYC documentsfor the movable & immovable assets will be asunder:

S. No.	Reserve Price (below which the property will not be sold)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Bid increment amount	Time & Date of e-Auction	Last date for submission of EMD along with KYC Documents
1	Rs 106,00,00,000/-	Rs.10,60,00,000/-	Rs.10,00,000/-	From 11.30 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. On 16.04.2025	15.04.2025 up to 4.00 p.m.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTIES

Tender No: - SBIN400033542008
(Land is in the name of M/S Shankar rice Industries and Commercial Complex is in the name of M/S Shankar Mall)

Earlier Schedule 1 : A part of Sy No 4 and 5 of Tumkur Amanikere village and bearing Municipal No 4309/3232 measuring 17185.65 sq ft, situated at Sira Road, Tumkur, out of it watchman shed and rice mill building, godown, Engine room and expeller room, more fully described in the sketch with measurements in the name of Shankar Rice Industries situated by the side of the Sira high road, Tumkur bounded by East: Sira Road, West: Remaining buildings and site of vendors bearing Municipal No. 4309/3232 and buildings of D. Vardhaman and the middle common wall with equal rights, North: Tumkur tank wasteweir Halla, South: Building of D. Vardhaman and the middle common wall with equal rights.

Earlier Schedule 2: A part of Sy No 4 and 5 of Tumkur Amanikere village and bearing Municipal No 4309/3232 measuring 2 acre 8 guntas,i.e, 95832 sq ft situated at Sira Road, Tumkur, out of it boiler room with Chimni, caster oil room, Engine room. Oil tank room, well and vacant site more fully described in the sketch with measurement in the name of Shankar rice Industries situated by the side of the Sira high road, Tumkur bounded by East: Building and site of the purchaser purchased under registered sale deed dated 02.05.83 West: Land of S. P Subba Rao, retired Revenue Inspector, North: Tumkur Tank wasteweir Halla,
South: Property of D. Vardhamana and D Parswanath and the middle common wall with equal rights to the schedule property and D. Vardhaman and D. Parswanath property

Now Combined Schedule 1 and Schedule 2

All that part and parcel of commercial land and Building on schedule 1 and 2 as above situated at Khata no 3809/16, Sy no 4 & 5 of Tumkur Amanikere Village now under Tumkur city Corporation limits bearing khata no 3809/16, PID No 59331 measuring total area 101601 sqft. (G+3 and Terrace floor with RCC steel frame structure building)and bounded by: East by: Sira Road, West by: Private Property, North by: Tumkur Tank Waste Water Halla, South by: Private Property

Reserve Price: Rs.106,00,00,000/-
EMD: Rs.10,60,00,000/-
[Land and building will be sold as single lot]

For further details regarding inspection of the property the intending bidder may contact the Authorised Officer Shri. Krishnamurthy C (AGM& CLO) and Mr. Prashant Verma (Manager &CO) as mentioned above.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the links provided by the Secured Creditors represented by the Authorised Officer, State Bank of India, SAMB, Bengaluru, i.e., (1)https://ebkray.in., (2) www.sbi.co.in

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 10.03.2025

Sd/-
Authorised Officer

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(Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India)
PB No. 1718, Vimanapura Post, Bangalore-560017

ADA:ADM:EST:AD-130:2025 **13-03-2025**

Corrigendum to Advertisement No. ADV-130 dated 12-03-2025

With reference to ADA Advertisement No. ADV-130 dated 12-03-2025 published in this newspaper on 13-03-2025 regarding recruitment of Project Scientists at ADA.

2. The number of vacancies for EWS category for Project Scientist 'B' post as mentioned in para 2 of the advertisement is amended to read as Eight (8) instead of Nine (9) as advertised earlier.

3. All other details of the notification remain unchanged.

Director (Admin & HR), ADA

Government of Karnataka
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI

No : EE/PRED/KLB/KKRDB /TS-5/TND/2024-25/4885 Date : 11/03/2025

:: SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

(Through E-procurement Two Cover System)

1) Name of work: 1. Improvements to Road from Melkunda K village to Melkunda B village in Kalaburagi Taluka Indent No.13473, 2. Improvements to road from Pattan village to Neeloor village Road in Kalaburagi Taluka District Kalaburagi Indent No.13469, 3. Improvements to road from Taj Sultanpur-Syed Chincholi village intermediate semi road (car track) upto Ganjalkhed and Improvements to road from Savalagi B village main road to Sharanayya Mutya Math of Savalagi B village in Kalaburagi Taluka Indent No.13572, 2) Head of account **5054 Roads for the year 2023-24,** 3) Amount put to tender: 13473 **Rs. 8376922.33,** 13469 **Rs. 8318395.71,** 13572 **Rs. 8309144.07,** 4) Class of Contractor: Class – III, Class-II and Above, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **12-03-2025 to 25-03-2025 upto 4.00 pm,** 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: 13473 Rs. 200000.00, 13469 Rs. 200000.00, 13572 Rs. 200000.00, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **12-03-2025 to 25-03-2025 upto 4.00 pm,** 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **26-03-2025 After 4.00 pm**, 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **28-03-2025 After 11.00 am**, 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, Rajapur Kalaburagi, 12) Website Address: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1079/KSMC&A/2024-25 **Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi**

KARNATAKA RURAL ROAD DEVELEOPMENT AGENCY,
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PROJECT DIVISION, HAVANNAVAR
BUILDING, CLUB ROAD, BELGAUM.

Telephone No: 0831-2420728, Fax Email.: 0831-2420728, Email: kn-blg1@pmgsy.nic.in

No. EE/Pr.Din/BGM/TCH/TND/NGNRY 3 & 4/2024-25/582 Date : 12.03.2025

SHORT TERM TENDER-CALL-3

On behalf of Governor of Karnataka, Karnataka Rural road Development Agency invites Item Rate Tenders in Belagavi Grameen Constituency, Belagavi (South) and Hukkeri Constituency for the implementation of Rural Road through KPPP website. Under NGNRY-III & IV (Renewal work) Saving Amount adopting the guidelines of the PMGSY works by two cover system This scheme is fully funded by the Government of Karnataka.

Calendar of Events of tendering is as follows:

1. EMD				As per KPPP Guidlines
Package Details				
Sl.No.	**Package No.**	**Constituency**	**Category**	
01	KS-04-15B	Belagavi Grameen	Other	Rs.14,52,300.00
02.	KS-04-95B	Belagavi Grameen	Other	Rs.42,06,893.00
03.	KS-04-69A	Belagavi South	SC	Rs.85,60,294.00
04.	KS-04-42A	Hukkeri	Categroy-1	Rs.59,13,010.00
05.	KS-04-77A	Hukkeri	ST	Rs.83,07.600.00
2. Accessing the bid document on e-procurement portal from				12-03-2025
3. Last date for online submission of Technical & Financial Bid				21-03-2025 (17.30 Hours)
4. Opening of Technical Bid				24-03-2025 (11.00Hours)
5. Opening of Financial Bid				Will be intimated later

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1907/KSMCA/2024-25

Sd/-Tendering Officer,
Executive Engineer, Project Division, Belagavi.

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
Syndicate Bank
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Head Office: Bangalore

E-Auction Sale of Properties on 29.03.2025

Last date of EMD : 28.03.2025

ARM-1 Branch, 2nd Floor, No.86, Spencer Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore-560001. Ph: 08025310066. E-mail: cb2366@canarabank.com

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described Immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **ARM-1 Branch, Bengaluru of the Canara Bank, will be sold on "As is where is". "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 29.03.2025 (Sl.No.1 & 2 - 10.30 AM to 11.00AM, Sl.No.3 - 11.30 AM TO 12.00 PM)** through E-Auction underthe Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer the link "E-Auction" provided in Canara Bank's website **(www.canarabank.com) or E-Wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (https://baanknet.com/) portal and may contact ARM-1 Branch, Bengaluru, Canara Bank, Ph. No.080-25310066, 9627872626, 7483935007, 9538406090 and 9598559920** during office hours on any working day.

The Earnest Money shall be Deposited by way of **E-Wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (https://baanknet.com/)** portal directly or by generating the Challan therein to deposit the EMD through RTGS/NEFT in the account details as mentioned in the said challan on or before **28.03.2025 - 5.00 pm** **(₹. in lakhs)**

Lot No	Name & Address of the Borrower / Guarantor / Mortgagor	Description of the immovable assets:	Total Dues	a. Reserve Price b. EMD c. Incremental Bid	Inspection date & time
1	**(1) Smt. B K Prema** W/o T Varadaraju, Nallu Village, Hanumanahalli Post, Mulbagal Taluk, Kolar Ddistrict-563127. **(2) Sri Varadaraj T** S/o Thimmarayappa, Nallur Village, Hanumanhalli Post, Mulbagal Taluk, Kolar District-563127. **(3) Shri Raghu K** S/o G Krishanappa Opp. to APMC Yard, St. Annes School Main Road, Mulbagal, Kolar District-563131.	Vacant Land Site No.145/4 of Nallur Village, Duggasandra Hobli, Mulabagal Taluk, Kolar District. Total Extent of the land is 1 acre 37 Guntas. **Coordinates of the property: Latitude- 13.165667, Longitude- 78.268833**	**Rs. 42614,476.86 as on 11.03.2025 with further interest and cost thereon. Symbolic possession**	a) ₹. 71.72 b) ₹. 7.17 c) ₹.1.00	21.03.2025 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM. with Prior Appointment with Authorised Officer
		Vacant Land Site No.44 old Khata No.9913/1, PID No.30-9-3K Sy No.32/1A, Shivakeshavanagar, Sonnavadi Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mulbagal Taluk, Kolar District. Total extent of the land 1200 Sq.ft. **Coordinates of the property: Latitude- 13.155463, Longitude- 78.406282**		a) ₹. 7.38 b) ₹. 0.74 c) ₹. 0.50	
		Vacant Land Site No.65 Old Khata No.9913/1 PID No. 30-9-3K Sy.No.32/1A Shivakeshavanagar, Sonnavadi Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mulabagal Taluk, Kolar District. Total extent of the land 1200 Sq.ft. **Coordinates of the property: Latitude- 13.155571, Longitude- 78.406607**		a) ₹. 7.38 b) ₹. 0.74 c) ₹. 0.50	
		Vacant Land Site No.19 & 20 Old Khata No.9913/1 PID No. 30-9-3K Sy.No.32/1A Shivakeshavanagar, Sonnavadi Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mulabagal Taluk, Kolar District. Total extent of the land 2400 Sq.ft. **Coordinates of the property: Latitude- 13.155598, Longitude- 78.406136**		a) ₹. 14.77 b) ₹. 1.48 c) ₹. 0.50	
		Land and Building Site No.135/1 of Dugasandra Hobli, Mulabagal Taluk, Kolar District. Total Extent of the land 1 acres 37 Guntas and Total Extent of the Plot 1.925 acres. **Coordinates of the property: Latitude- 13.162750, Longitude- 78.267083**		a) ₹. 192.33 b) ₹. 19.23 c) ₹. 1.00	
2	**(1) M/s Covalent,** No.46/2, (Ravi Edible Oil Refinery Compund), Bisuvanahalli, Doddaballabpur Road, Bengaluru Rural District-561203. **(2) Sri P Roshan** S/o Sri Paramashivaiah, No.48, 2nd Main Road, Palace Guttahalli, Bengaluru-560003.	Residential site carved out of lands in Sy No. 168 of Kodihalli village, Varthur Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk converted for residential purpose vide b.DIS.ALN.SR/6362 dated 21.03.1974 now within the limits of BBMP and bearing Municiple No. 168, PID No.74-1-168 situated at old airport road, Kodihalli, Bengaluru under corporation ward No.74, Jeevana Bhimanagar and the site measuring 1935 sq ft. Boundaries of the site: East by: property belonging to Bandiyappa, West by: Diamond district apartment, North by: old Airport road, South by: Remaining portion of Vinay Kumar. **Owner of the property: Mr. P Roshan. Co-ordinates of the site: Latitude: 12.960222, Longitude: 77.644278.**	**Rs. 123609434.4 as on 11.03.2025 with further interest and cost thereon. Symbolic Possession**	a) ₹. 400.54 b) ₹. 40.05 c) ₹. 1.00	21.03.2025 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM, with Prior Appointment with Authorised Officer
3	**(1) Savithri Jewellers Pvt. Ltd., (2) Mrs. Deepa Vernekar** W/o Mr. Prashant Wandkar, Director Savithri Jewellers Pvt.Ltd, **(3) Ms. Shilpa Vernaker** D/o Mr. Suresh Vernekar, Director Savithri Jewellers Pvt.Ltd, **(4) Mr. Kishore Vernekar** S/o Mr. Suresh Vernekar **(5) Sri Suresh Vernekar** S/o Mr. Dattatray Vernekar, **All are residing at:** No.165, Maauli Mantralaya, Lakshmi Teimple Road, Hindwadi, Belgaum, Karnataka-590011.	Property bearing R S No. 59/1 measuring 1 acres situated at Madhavapura, Belguam and bounded on the East by R S No. 58, West by R S No.76, North by: R S No. 57 and South by R S No.77. **Coordinates of the property Latitude- 15.8355970 Longitude- 74.5308150.**	**Rs. 429043106.52 as on 11.03.2025 with further interest and cost thereon. Symbolic possession**	a) ₹. 187.00 b) ₹. 18.70 c) ₹. 1.00	21.03.2025 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM, with Prior Appointment with Authorised Officer

Known encumbrances, if any: Not to the knowledge of the Bank.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer the link "E-Auction" provided in Canara Bank's website (www.canarabank.com) or E-Wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (https://baanknet.com/) portal and may contact ARM-1 Branch, Bengaluru, Canara Bank, Ph. No.080-25310066, 9627872626,7483935007,9538406090 and 9598559920 during office hours on any working day.

Date : 13.03.2025 **Place: Bengaluru** **Sd/- Authorised Officer, Canara Bank**

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
Syndicate Bank
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Head Office : Bangalore

E-AUCTION Sale of Properties on 29.03.2025

Last date of EMD : 28.03.2025

ARM – I Branch, 2nd Floor, No. 86, Spencers Tower, M.g. Road, Bangalore – 560001. Ph No. : 080 25310066. E-Mail – cb2366@canarabank.com

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described imovable propeties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical/Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **ARM Branch-1,** Bengaluru of the Canara Bank, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **29.03.2025 at 10:30 AM to 11:00 AM,** through E-Auction under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

For details with regard to E-Auction & digital signature please contact the service provider **M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited, Helpdesk Number : 8291220220, Website: https://baanknet.com/**

The Earnest Money shall be Deposited by way of E-Wallet of **M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (https://baanknet.com/)** portal directly or by generating the Challan therein to deposit the EMD through RTGS/NEFT in the account details as mentioned in the said challan on or before **28.03.2025 5.00 pm.**

(Rs. in lacs)

Sl.No.	Name and address of the Borrower / Guarantor / Mortgagor	Description of the immovable assets	Total Dues Possession Type	a. Reserve Price b. EMD c. Incremental Bid	Inspection Date & Time
1.	**1. M/s Nature Home Care Products 2.Sri. G K Ramachandra S/o Late Krishanppa 1 And 2 AreResiding At :** No. #43, 1st Main Valagerhalli Kengeri, Near Chithrakoota School Bangalore-560056. **3.Current address: Sri G K Ramachandra** No.#06, 1st Main, 9th CrossMTS Layout, K S Town Opp: Bethesda High Bangalore-560050.	Property bearing site No. 8/4A, assessment No. 24/1 Valagerahalli Village Katha No. 49, measuring East to West 80 feet and North to south 60 feet, Totally measuring 1800 Sq.ft, Situated at Kengri, Kengri Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Presently comes under the limits of BBMP, Bengaluru. bounded at **East by :** Private Property, **West By**: :Private Property, **North by :** Road And **South by :**Private Property. **Coordinates of the property Latitude- 12.9331210 Longitude- 77.4950220**	**Rs. 2,97,52,348.25** as on **11.03.2025** with further interest and cost thereon	**a) ₹ 185.00 b ₹ 18.50 c) ₹ 1.00**	**28.03.2025 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM.** with Prior Appointment with The Authorized Officer
2.	**1. Kwikfix Hospitality Pvt Ltd** Plot No. 8A, Attibele Industrial Area Anekal, Bangalore-562107. **Also at :** Plot No.120, Export Promational Industrial Park (EPIP), Whitefield, Bangalore-560066. **2. Sri Manoj Thyagaraj S/o Thyagaraj K M 3. Mrs. Judy Sweena Kamal W/o Manoj Thyagaraj** No. 2& 3 are at : Shraddha Tulip, A Block, AECS Layout, Kundanahalli, Whitefield, Bangalore-560066. **4. Sri Thyagaraj K M S/o Sri Muniswamappa** No. 404, 5th Main, 5th Cross, 1st Stage, 3rd Block, Bangalore North-560043. **5. Sri ChristpherJames Alphose S/o Sri Anthony Swamy** T-3, Adharsha Hotel, 3rd Floor, 1st main, Gopala Reddy Layout, Bangalore-560043.	Residential flat No A-3, 3rd Floor of the apartment known as SRADDHA TULIP having super built up area of 2100 Sft. with one covered car parking space and 414 Sft. of UDS in landed property bearing converted Site no. 3, Mahadevapura CMC Katha no. 448, and converted site bearing nos. 4 & 5, Mahadevapura CMC Katha no. 449, situated at Jayaram Reddy Layout Kundalahalli Village, K R Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk measuring 5040 Sft. standing in the name of Smt Judy Sweena Kamal **Value at Sanction: ₹. 151.60 Coordinates of the property Latitude- 12.57565N Longitude- 77.42460E**	**Rs. 13,46,72,042.06** as on **11.03.2025** with further interest and cost thereon	**a) ₹ 166.86 b ₹ 16.69 c) ₹ 1.00**	**21.03.2025 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM.** with Prior Appointment with The Authorized Officer
3.	**1. M/s Pegasi Spirits Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly known as 3 Aces Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.) through its authorised representatives at Regd. Office -** House No. 22, Road no. 62, Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi – 110026. **Head Office –** S K Arcade,, No.33/1, Doddakannali, Carmalaram Post, Sarjapura road, Bangalore – 560035. **2. Mr. Neeraj Kukreja (Director) S/o Jagdish Kukreja. 3. Mrs. Ritika Kukreja(Director) W/o Neeraj Kukreja** both 2 & 3 residing at Villa #151, Adarsh Palm Retreat, Bellandur, Bangalore – 560103. **4. Mr. Jagdish Kukreja (Guarantor) S/o Kaura Ram Kukreja. 5. Mrs. Pushpa Kukreja(Guarantor)** Both 4 & 5 residing at B 1801, Skylark Esta Hoodi, Whitefield, Bangalore - 560048.	Industrial shed at leasehold land of 3 acres and 40 guntas land in Sy.No 119 & Sy.No. 120 in the name of Chowda Reddy address of V Kallahalli, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-562125. Coordinates of the property **Latitude- 12.9753186 Longitude- 77.6046092**	**Rs. 6,62,04,352.41** as on **12.03.2025** plus further interest and cost thereon	**a) ₹ 124.20 b ₹ 12.42 c) ₹ 1.00**	**21.03.2025 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM.** with Prior Appointment with The Authorized Officer
		Machineries and equipment's for Beer manufacturing kept at Sy. No. 119 and 120, V Kallahalli, Sarjapur Road, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-562125. **Coordinates of the property Latitude- 12.9753186 Longitude- 77.6046092**		**a) ₹ 62.00 b ₹ 6.20 c) ₹ 1.00**	

Known encumbrances, if any: Not to the knowledge of the Bank.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer the link "E-Auction" provided in Canara Bank's website (www.canarabank.com) or E-Wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (https://baanknet.com/) portal and may contact ARM-1 Branch, Bengaluru, Canara Bank, Ph. No.08025310066, 9627872626,7483935007,9538406090 and 9598559920 during office hours on any working day.

Place: Bangalore
Date : 13.03.2025

Sd/- Authorized Officer, Canara Bank

Bengaluru's AVGC-XR sector goes pale as Technicolor closes shop

As many as 3,000 employees in Bengaluru lost jobs recently. The company was the global face of the State's AVGC-XR, a sector Karnataka has been ambitiously trying to scale up, reports **Mini Tejaswi**

The suddenness was truly shocking. It unfolded like a scene from a Hollywood horror movie – although most of our talent went into creating fun films for global audiences," said a senior rigging artist, a professional who builds digital skeletons for 3D characters and objects in animation and visual effects. The artist, who requested anonymity, worked at Technicolor's studio in Bengaluru's International Tech Park, now closed.

The implosion of Technicolor India, owned by the Technicolor Group of Paris, which developed visual effects (VFX), cartoons and animation graphics for hundreds of full-length feature films for Hollywood, did indeed appear like a scene from a scary movie for its 3,200 employees in Bengaluru and Mumbai who lost their jobs suddenly.

This is the first massive layoff the Indian AVGC-XR (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality) industry has seen, affecting the sector in Bengaluru acutely. About 3,000 of its employees were based in Bengaluru and 200 in Mumbai. It has a global headcount of over 10,000 across France, the US, Canada, and India.

'Thought it was a prank'

"We had no clue about it until HR asked us to pack up and leave the office in 15 minutes on February 24, 2025, our last working day. Some of us still thought it was a prank. It took time for us to digest that we are part of the global closure of Technicolor," claimed the rigging artist who chose to withhold his identity.

Technicolor in Bengaluru and Mumbai employed hundreds of animators, lighting artists, simulators, image rendering specialists, experts in shades and materials, shadow and occlusion managers, collaborators, colour graders, post processing specialists, special effects experts, graphic artists, atmosphere and volume metric experts who all worked for Hollywood movies by various production houses including DreamWorks Pictures, Universal Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros, MGM, Sony Pictures, The Disney Studios, 20th Century Fox, Marvel Studios, Amazon Studios, and many others.

The last full-length Hollywood feature film Technicolor India completed was *Mufasa: The Lion King* by Walt Disney. "Mufasa: The Lion King" has grossed a worldwide total of $708 million, with collections in India accounting for ₹132.65 crore. Some global releases that Technicolor worked from Bengaluru included *Puss in Boots, Madagaskar 3, Kung Fu Panda series, Snow White, Lion King and Mission Impossible. Plankton: The Movie and Mickey Mouse Clubhouse.*

With the global closure of Technicolor, all four studios/ divisions of the company – MPC (film & episodic), The Mill (ad films for brands), Mikros Animation (animation) and Technicolor Games (games) have come to a standstill, putting an end to Technicolor's iconic global journey of 110 years.

> We had no clue about it until HR asked us to pack up and leave the office in 15 minutes. Some of us thought it was a prank. It took time for us to digest that we are part of the global closure of Technicolor.
>
> **AN EMPLOYEE OF TECHNICOLOR IN BENGALURU**

Biren Ghose, Managing Director, Technicolor India, in a virtual town hall on February 26, told the employees, ''Technicolour India is financially and operationally not moving forward. We reached a state where we are not able to function as an organisation anymore."

This came just after Technicolor Group, the parent company, filed for court recovery procedure in France, citing its inability to find investors to continue to do business further. Ghose said, however, that the India leadership and counterparts in other geographies were not privy to this finality and suddenness of the decision to close down the operations. India management came to know about it only when they received an email from Caroline Parot, CEO of Technicolor Group.

Parot's email to employees on February 24 said the group was unable to find new investors despite extensive efforts and therefore filed for court "recovery procedure" before the French Court of Justice to give a chance to find solutions. It is understood that severe financial difficulties led to the global closure of all its studios and business operations.

Jolt to State's industry

The sudden closure of Technicolour sent shockwaves across the global VXF/ AVGC-XR industry, more so to Karnataka, the first state to bring out a policy for AVGC-XR with an ambitious plan to grow the sector and create close to one and a half lakh jobs in the next five years. Technicolor India has been a global face of Karnataka's AVGC-XR industry.

Incidentally, news of Technicolor's exit coincided with GAFX-2025 (Games, Animation and Visual FX), an annual conference hosted by Karnataka government under the supervision of the State's IT Minister, Priyank Kharge.

Kharge said the closure of Technicolor was due to "a global failure", but the Indian arm had the right talent and able leadership and has been consistently delivering on global platforms, winning awards and has been profitable. "Karnataka, backed by its progressive policies and supportive ecosystems, offers the right environment for the AVGC-XR sector to thrive and create jobs,'' said the Minister.

However, the irony remains that when global AVGC-XR experts at GAFX-2025 held a series of discussions and deliberations on the global business and employment scope of the industry on February 27 this year, dozens of Technicolor employees, who lost their global jobs some days prior, were in distress, unsure of their future.

> The entire industry is shaken by Technicolor's exit. It's a jolt to the industry globally.
>
> **ASHISH S. KULKARNI**
> Industry veteran

Industry veteran Ashish S. Kulkarni, Chairman of FICCI for AVGC-XR and Chairman of MCCIA Animation & Gaming committee, said, ''The entire industry is certainly shaken by Technicolor's exit. It's a jolt to the industry globally, shock to Karnataka and the whole AVGX-XR ecosystem in the country."

Silver lining?

However, he said there could be respite as clients, mostly large movie production houses, would now look for other service providers within India. So the work Technicolor has been doing from India could go to other qualified AVGC-XR players in the country, and won't be lost for the country, Kulkarni argued.

He further added that Technicolor's exit may trigger a shakeout and consolidation in India's AVGC-XR sector, and this could also accelerate project-based hiring.

Echoing similar sentiments, Munjal B. Shroff, Director and Chief Operating Officer of Graphiti Multimedia, a production house and animation and VFX studio in Mumbai, said, "This has come as a shock for the industry globally and more so for India and Bengaluru. But for global production houses, their shows should go on, and they will look at other graphic content providers in the country.''

According to AVGC-XR experts, there is some slowdown globally, as some global studios and graphics firms are yet to recover from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, plus there is a cascading effect of the writers' strike in the U.S. Until some months ago, Hollywood writers were on a strike to protect their livelihoods from generative AI. "When there are no stories, no production happens, and the industry globally suffered for months,'' Shroff said.

Labour Department in talks

Meanwhile, Labour Commissioner H.N. Gopalakrishna met Technicolor employees, representatives of Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees Union (KITU) and two legal counsels representing Technicolor on March 11. He told *The Hindu*, "Employees have shared their grievances. They say their February salaries are not paid. Tax deductions from their salaries are not remitted to the IT Department from July 2024, according to them. Office rent has not been paid for three months.''

Gopalakrishna said the management has so far not officially terminated the services of the employees. Nobody from the company attended the meeting except their legal advisors. They sought time to come back with authorisation and statements.

''Unless we know whether it's an official layoff, retrenchment or closure, we are unable to decide the next course of action,'' the Labour Commissioner added.

"They told us no further job and no salary. But they did not terminate us officially because they don't want us to take legal action against them. So, we are still employees of Technicolor as per the documents. They issued experience certificates to us and told us we were free to explore other jobs,'' said an employee on the condition of anonymity. According to a city-based hiring consultant, many of these employees have floated their CVs on multiple job sites and also on LinkedIn seeking alternate career engagements.

KITU President V.J.K. Nair said the mass layoff at Technicolor has put several thousands of employees in distress. Hundreds of employees approached the union on March 2, and the union formed a unit of Technicolor employees and filed an industrial dispute at the Labour Commissioner's office.

"We are following the procedure. We are also filing separate complaints to recover their pending salary under Section 33C. The next conciliation meeting with the Labour Commissioner will be held on March 18 in Bengaluru,'' said Nair.

Uncertain times

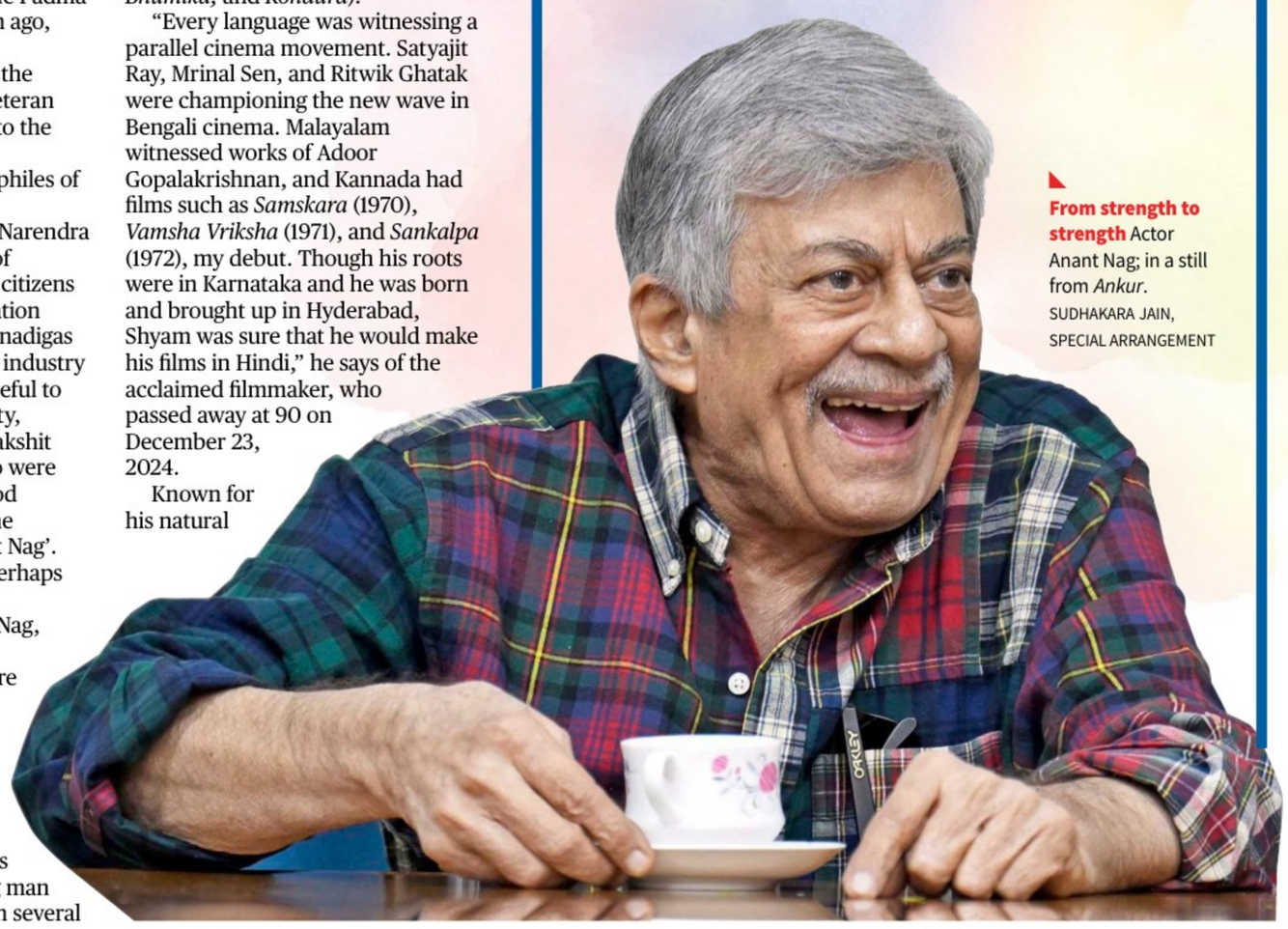
As uncertainty prevails, over 3,200 animators are in deep distress. Their salaries remain unpaid, and they say that they are not able to pay their rents and EMIs as ''funds from the headquarters did not arrive.''

"We have relocated to Bengaluru for this job with our families. Our children are in school. We feel betrayed and abandoned by the company that we happily served for years. We were suddenly sort of shooed away without even being allowed to take our personal belongings on that day,'' alleged a graphic artist with tears rolling down her cheeks.

An email query sent to Technicolor headquarters in Paris didn't yield any response.

Trade secrets

Veteran Kannada actor Anant Nag, who received the Padma Bhushan this year, goes back in time to recollect some of the milestone moments from his career



From strength to strength Actor Anant Nag; in a still from *Ankur*. SUDHAKARA JAIN, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Anant Nag, who was conferred with the Padma Bhushan a month ago, dedicated the long-delayed recognition to the people of Karnataka. The veteran believed the honour is due to the relentless support from his admirers, who include cinephiles of all generations.

"In 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the concept of 'People's Padma'. He urged citizens to participate in the nomination process for the awards. Kannadigas and members from the film industry rallied behind me. I am grateful to them," he says. Rishab Shetty, Puneeth Rajkumar, Yash, Rakshit Shetty, and Hemanth M Rao were some prominent Sandalwood artistes who drove the online campaign 'Padma for Anant Nag'.

The Padma Bhushan is perhaps the biggest milestone in the chequered career of Anant Nag, who "never set out to be an actor". A solid stint in theatre in Mumbai and his collaboration with Shyam Benegal set the foundation for his acting journey.

Steady start

Even as Amitabh Bachchan's portrayal of an angry young man fired people's imagination in several blockbuster films, director Benegal pioneered a new wave in Hindi cinema in the 1970s. Anant Nag starred in five consecutive Benegal movies (*Ankur, Nishant, Manthan, Bhumika,* and *Kondura*).

"Every language was witnessing a parallel cinema movement. Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak were championing the new wave in Bengali cinema. Malayalam witnessed works of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and Kannada had films such as *Samskara* (1970), *Vamsha Vriksha* (1971), and *Sankalpa* (1972), my debut. Though his roots were in Karnataka and he was born and brought up in Hyderabad, Shyam was sure that he would make his films in Hindi," he says of the acclaimed filmmaker, who passed away at 90 on December 23, 2024.

Known for his natural performances, Anant Nag has always stressed that "acting is behaving." Did portraying intriguing characters in parallel films early in his career influence his acting style? "I worked with the noted theatre director Satyadev Dubey in Mumbai. He would say, 'Do it your way'," he recollects.

"When I saw some English films, especially historical ones such as *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *Becket* (1964), and the works of of Marlon Brando, I saw natural acting and was impressed by that," he says.

Early in his career, Anant Nag found it hard to convince filmmakers about his style. "In Kannada, filmmakers called my style 'Bengali style of acting'. During the shoot, they would tell me they couldn't see my performance. It was like a slap on my face. I would ask them to take out a rush print and check once. If they were not satisfied with my effort, I was ready to step aside from the films. I was not ready to compromise and overdo," he explains.

Anant Nag and his younger brother, the late Shankar Nag, formed a great partnership in Kannada cinema. Until Shankar Nag's sudden demise in a car crash in 1990, the Nag brothers made many content-oriented movies, including *Minchina Ota* (1981) and *Accident* (1984). Both films were directed by Shankar and produced by the Nag brothers.

Public demand

Even if critics loved *Minchina Ota*, the social thriller did not fare well at the box office. "I predicted the movie's fate, so we kept a low budget. The film won seven awards. However, some people brought a stay order to the awards for some reason. It showed that they lacked a sporting spirit. We didn't make that movie for awards. We wanted commercial success. It ran to packed houses in the first four days and then fizzled out," says Anant Nag.

The actor detests the term 'ahead of its time', often used to pinpoint the reason behind the dismal performance of the two movies. "*Accident*, like *Minchina Ota*, got many awards but didn't make great money. Of course, I can't completely blame the audience. People were used to seeing a hero-heroine track, comedy, dance, and songs. *Accident* was a unique thriller. People take time to accept something new. Some dismissed the film, saying it was "ahead of its time." Many who said that hadn't even seen the movie."

It didn't take long for Anant Nag to realise that big money lay in commercial cinema. He smoothly transitioned to mainstream movies from arthouse films, holding on to his subtlety on screen. After decades of being a dependable lead actor in comedy (*Ganesha* series), relationships (*Bayalu Dari, Chandanada Gombe*), and family dramas (*Beladingala Bale*), Anant Nag began experimenting as a character artiste. The films of Yogaraj Bhat in the late 2000s (*Mungaru Male, Gaalipata,* and *Pancharangi)* firmly established him as a solid supporting actor.

"Yogaraj Bhat would submit his scripts, and they had great scope for me to perform. He always had something to convey to the audience."

Still going strong

Anant Nag is a favourite of new-generation Kannada filmmakers such as Hemanth M Rao and Rishab Shetty. While Hemanth offered him complex roles in *Godhi Banna Sadharana Mykattu* (2016) and *Kavaludaari* (2019), Rishab used his acting prowess in *Sarkari Hiriya Prathamika Shaale* (2018).

"These filmmakers helped me break monotony. Hemanth doesn't have a theatre background, but he is a thinker. He has watched many Western films. He has sharp and rooted stories. Rishab is from theatre, and he hails from coastal Karnataka. His approach to cinema is influenced by *Bayalata* (folk dance) and Yakshagana, which he witnessed regularly in childhood," he describes.

As he yearns for more meaty roles, the 76-year-old wishes to see one change in the Kannada industry. "I wish there were more quality screenwriters in the industry. We also need more gifted playwrights," he says.

Empress of octaves

Get set to be mesmerised by Padma Bhushan Begum Parween Sultana, who will perform in Bengaluru this weekend

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What happens when you hear the very voice you revered most of your life? You struggle to focus on what is to be asked. This was the mood with which the barely 10-minute telephonic interview with the legendary Padma Bhushan awardee Begum Parween Sultana went.

It was a rough 10-minutes because on one hand, you are struggling to not get swayed by the beautiful voice on the other end of the call, and second, your eyes keep a stern watch on the clock ticking by as you listen to her speak.

The singer will be in Bengaluru on March 15 as part of Bhoomija and Prestige Centre for Performing Art's *Holi Re! - A Spectacular Evening of Music and Dance*. Known for her exquisite voice range that oscillates flawlessly from the lowest to the highest octave, she leaves you mesmerised with her rendition of 'Bhavani Dayani' on one hand or haunted by 'Hamen Tumse Pyar Kitna' from the Hindi film *Kudrat*. And who can forget her soulful serenade in, 'Kaun Gali Gayo Shyam', composed by Naushad for *Pakeezah*?

The singer, who trained under her father, Ikramul Majid, guru Chinmoy Lahiri and Ustaad Dilshad Khan, describes the them as "pillars of my life and music."

"They are different individuals with their own identities and I took something from each of them and created my own identity. I learnt a lot from my father and my music life begins with my him. Lahiriji, was a great acharya, a music nayak. Unfortunately, he did not live long, but I was blessed to learn from him for five to six years. In fact, he was the one who suggested I continue my riyaz with Dilshadji and introduced me to him. The credit for what I am today goes to all three of them," says Parween.

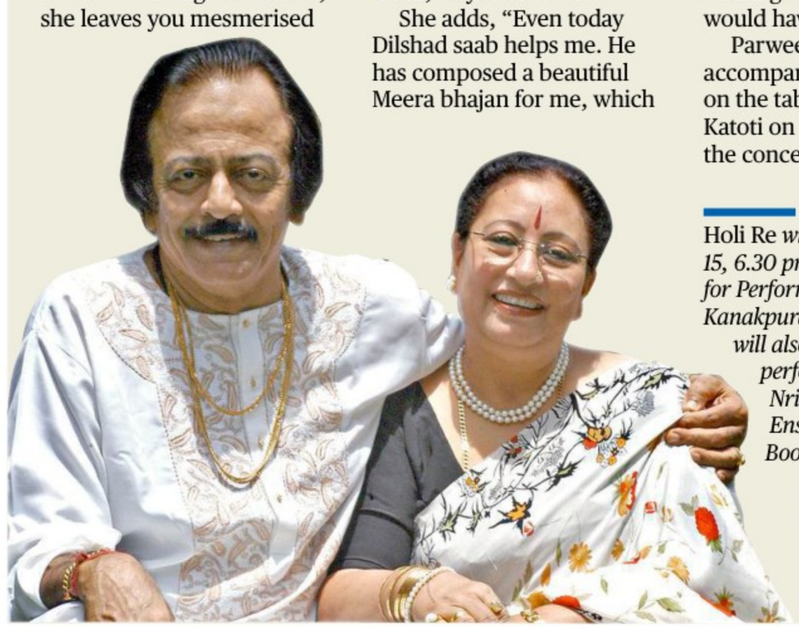
She adds, "Even today Dilshad saab helps me. He has composed a beautiful Meera bhajan for me, which I will be presenting in Bengaluru for *Holi Re*."

Irrespective of the many film songs, a handful such as, 'Hamein Tumse Pyaar' or Ustad Rashid Khan's 'Aaoge jab tum' from *Jab We Met*, have stood the test of time and become evergreen tunes, loved by generations of music lovers. Yet, unlike the popular belief that classical singers do not get offered film songs, Parween says, "It is the other way round. We do not like to sing for films."

"Hindi films songs do not have a long life. For instance, compare Lata Mangeshkar's songs and today's songs. There is a huge difference. Classical music is divine and we feel the divinity in our music. Though most of my film songs have done well, I am a pure classical singer at heart."

"Classical music leads you to a supreme world – one of bhakti and love. That is the power of our Indian classical music," says the legendary singer, who leaves you wishing that the 10-minutes would have lasted forever.

Parween will be accompanied by Ojas Adhiya on the tabla, and Ravindra Katoti on the harmonium at the concert



Holi Re will be held on March 15, 6.30 pm at Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Kanakpura Road. The evening will also feature a performance by the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble. Tickets on BookMyShow

Tuned in Begum Parween Sultana and Ustad Dilshad Khan. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Italian musician Albert Hera, a protégé of Bobby McFerrin, on Epic Jazz and more

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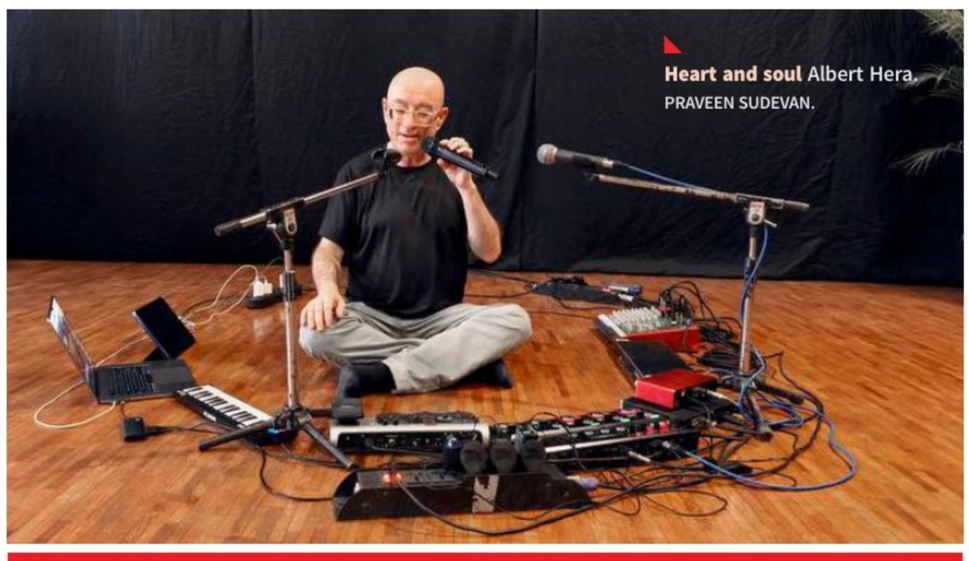


Heart and soul Albert Hera. PRAVEEN SUDEVAN.

Shot on OnePlus #FramesofIndia

Circle song

Albert Hera's presence is meditative. When I meet him on a sultry evening at Shoonya Centre for Art and Somatic Practices at Lalbagh, Bengaluru, our conversation begins not with notes or technique, but with something more visceral, more human.

During his commute in Bengaluru, he saw a procession carrying a dead person, with music, flowers, even fireworks. "It was shocking. And yet, it was beautiful," says the experimental jazz musician, who is a protégé of the legendary Bobby McFerrin.

This is Albert's first time in India. He finds it overwhelming – not in the way of chaos, but in the sheer intensity of experience. He finds so much life here, even in death.

Circle of sound

Albert's work is as much about human connection as it is about music. At the heart of his workshops in Bengaluru was Circle Singing, a practice that embodies both spontaneity and community. "Circle Singing is something I received from Bobby McFerrin as both an inspiration and a mission to share with more people," he explains.

The concept is deceptively simple: a group of singers stand in a circle, with a facilitator – often Albert himself – leading them through improvisational musical phrases.

These motifs are layered and built upon, drawing inspiration from jazz, folk, African, and Latin traditions. But it is more than a technique; it is an experience. "You can't reproduce the same thing again," Albert says. "Even the mistakes contribute to the creativity."

Today, in his workshops, the circle continues to serve as a space of trust, collaboration, and shared experiences.

Storytelling with jazz

Albert's deep exploration of vocal traditions led him to develop Epic Jazz, a genre that defies categorisation. "Epic Jazz is about narration and visualisation. It is improvisation and creation in the moment," he explains,

"Unlike traditional jazz, my performances are about using everything within me at that moment to create a different experience each time."

Albert is not looking to start a movement or a new school of music. Instead, he carries forward the "humanity, trust, and sense of connection" he has experienced.

Albert's work is not without its challenges.

"The discipline that has become a habit can sometimes control your spirit instead of freeing it," he admits. His goal is to keep pushing his boundaries, to ensure that freedom remains at the core of his music.

STEPOUT

Celebrating stagecraft

Prestige Centre for Performing Arts (PCPA) presents *Chiguru - Kannada Theatre Festival – Week 2*. Held between March 14 and 16, the festival will celebrate original works in Kannada. Hosted by PCPA, this festival will feature six original productions by prominent theatre groups from across Bengaluru.
At PCPA, Konanakunte. Tickets on BookMyShow

Threads of tradition

The National Design Centre (NDC), New Delhi, and Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, present the Bengaluru Saree Festival. It brings together over 75 skilled weavers, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and cooperative societies from across India.
At Shubh Convention Centre, between March 14 and March 20. Visit nationaldesigncentre.org.

Borrowings in CM's two terms account for 63% of loan burden: Ashok

IN THE LEGISLATURE

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok on Thursday alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's two tenures as Chief Minister had accounted for 63% of the State's total borrowings.

"The State's total loan burden stands at ₹7,81,095 crore of which ₹4,91,000 crore had been borrowed by Mr. Siddaramaiah accounting for a total of 63% of the State's total loan burden," Mr. Ashok said, while participating in a debate on the State Budget in the Assembly.

"The borrowings of the State that had touched a high of ₹80,641 crore as revenues were hit hard due to COVID-19 in 2021-22 under the BJP regime had reduced to ₹44,549 crore in 2022-23. But the borrowings shot up to ₹90,280 crore in 2023-24 soon after Mr. Siddaramaiah took over as the Chief Minister. It further increased to ₹1.07 lakh crore in 2024-25 and ₹1.16 lakh crore in 2025-26," Mr. Ashok said.

'17% for developement'

He alleged that only 17.4% of the total Budget is proposed to be spent on development.

Countering the claims of Minorities Welfare Minister Zameer Ahmed that the State Budget should have allocated ₹60,000 crore to Muslims as they account for 14% of population, Mr. Ashok said if the same argument is applied, then the SC/ST communities should have been given ₹98,701 crore as against the actual allotment of ₹42,017 crore as they account for 24% of the population.

Clarifying that he had used the total Budget size, including the committed expenditure to arrive at these figures, he said he had raised the point just to set the records straight with Mr. Zameer who too had gone by similar calculations.

CM rushes in

Earlier, Mr. Siddaramaiah and officials of the Finance Department rushed to the Assembly after the BJP members took exception to their absence when Mr. Ashok was speaking.

When Mr. Ashok began his speech on the Budget, his party colleagues pointed out that the front bench in the ruling party was almost empty, but for the presence of Energy Minister K.J. George. While Congress members maintained that the Chief Minister's health was not good, the Opposition argued that the Chief Minister should have formally informed the Speaker in that case.

Even as Mr. Ashok commenced his speech, the Chief Minister and officials arrived in the House.

Country's loan burden under Modi rose from ₹53.11 lakh cr. to ₹200 lakh crore: Siddaramaiah

CM says the borrowings are well within the norms prescribed by Fiscal Responsibility Act

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaking in the Legislative Assembly in Bengaluru on Thursday.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Launching a counter-attack on the Opposition BJP that accused him of plunging the State into a debt trap, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday alleged that the country's loan burden had increased rapidly from ₹53,11,000 crore when Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014-15 to ₹200,01,000 crore now.

Intervening during the debate on State Budget in the Assembly, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that the Narendra Modi-led government's borrowings for this year alone had touched about ₹15,00,000 crore.

"This is the truth and the truth will never be sweet, but bitter. This being the case, you are trying to accuse me of increasing the State's loan burden. You better shun your audacity," Mr. Siddaramaiah told the BJP members.

'No violation of norms'

Countering the Opposition's allegations that the State's loan burden had increased rapidly under his regime, Mr. Siddaramaiah maintained that he had not violated any norms while borrowing. "The Fiscal Responsibility Act that prescribes guidelines with respect to borrowings says that the healthy financial condition is determined by three factors - the State should be revenue surplus, the fiscal deficit should be less than 3% and the loans should be within 25% of GSDP," he pointed out.

"We have followed the two parameters, but could not ensure revenue surplus," he admitted. At the same time, he pointed out that the revenue deficit level had reduced from ₹27,000 crore during last year to ₹19,200 crore now. He declared that the State would become revenue surplus by next financial year, allaying fears that its finances were in a bad condition.

He said the State's fiscal deficit was 2.91%, well within the norms of being under 3%, and the borrowings were also at 24.95% of GSDP as against the norms of being under 25%.

Central Budget is basis

Countering the argument of BJP members that the debate on Central Budget was irrelevant in the State Assembly, Mr. Siddaramaiah said: "We cannot brush aside the Central Budget as a subject that should be discussed only in Parliament because Central Budget is the basis for the State Budget. In fact, we give revenues to the tune of ₹1.16 lakh crore to the Centre and in return get only ₹51,000 crore."

Mr. Siddaramaiah's reference to the Central Budget, particularly with respect to borrowings, triggered angry responses from the BJP, with Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok arguing that it would be better if the Chief Minister contests Lok Sabha elections, becomes MP, and raises the issue in Lok Sabha or advises Congress MPs in Karnataka to raise the issue. "Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman cannot come to this House to reply to you," Mr. Ashok said.

Govt. awaiting report on Unified Pension Scheme before reverting to OPS

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Minor Irrigation Minister N.S. Boseraju in the Legislative Council on Thursday.

The State government is awaiting further report on the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) by the committee headed by Additional Chief Secretary before taking a decision on reverting from the National Pension Scheme (NPS) to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). It has refused to set a time limit to settle the issue for the 2.86 lakh employees under NPS.

"The State government is serious on the issue and is awaiting the committee's recommendations. The Centre wants to work for a common scheme. The decision is being taken whether there should be a unified system for the country, or should States have their own," Minor Irrigation Minister N.S. Boseraju informed the Legislative Council on Thursday in response to a question by Congress member Ramoji Gowda. Mr. Boseraju was responding on behalf of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Mr. Gowda said that about 2,188 employees under NPS, who have retired after putting in more than 10 years' service, have been receiving pension in in the range of ₹1,000 to ₹3,000. "The committee in Karnataka has been sitting on the issue for over one-and-a-half years. The government has had multiple rounds of discussion. Our party (Congress) committed in its manifesto. No time limit has been set for reverting to OPS when neighbouring States have already done it."

Cong. member says committee in State has been sitting on the issue for over one-and-a-half years

Intervening in the discussion, Home Minister G. Parameshwara, who was the chairman of the Congress's manifesto committee, said: "We agreed in principle, and we are going to implement it. There are procedures. There is a financial implication of crores of rupees. The Centre has also realised the problem."

When Leader of the Opposition Chalavadi Narayanswamy questioned the delay despite Congress promising in its manifesto, Dr. Parameshwara said: "Did you have it in your manifesto?"

State proposes alternative to Navali balancing reservoir

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar in the Council on Thursday.

Karnataka, which had proposed construction of a balancing reservoir at Navali to overcome the silt problem at Tungabhadra reservoir, will share an alternative plan (without construction of a reservoir) with the riparian states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Karnataka is awaiting a meeting with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to discuss the issue.

Deputy Chief Minister and Irrigation Minister D.K. Shivakumar told the Legislative Council on Thursday that he had sought an appointment with Mr. Naidu to discuss the matter. "I have already spoken to the Irrigation Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh during a meeting in Rajasthan. I have sought time to explain both proposals," he said in response to a question from Congress member Basanna Gouda Badarli, who sought to know the reason for non-allocation to the Navali project in this Budget.

According to Mr. Shivakumar, the original proposal of constructing Navali reservoir had been sent to the Tungabhadra Board in which Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are also members. "Enormous silt has reduced the quantum of storage in Tungabhadra reservoir by about 30 tmcft. Previous governments have tried removing silt. However, a technical report states that removing silt is unviable. For Navali reservoir, about 15,000 acres need to be acquired in Koppal district. Alternatively, we have proposed water pumping without constructing the reservoir, which would benefit Karnataka by about 65% and the other States by 35%," he said, without providing details.

Mr. Shivakumar said he would remind the Centre about the issue during a meeting on Pennar river with the Tamil Nadu representative on March 18.

Speaking on Upper Krishna Project III, he said Karnataka was commitment to it. "We have appealed to the Centre on it. the BJP leaders from Karnataka should demonstrate their commitment by bringing pressure on the Centre to issue a notification in this regard and help in completion of the project," said Mr. Shivakumar.

2,019 cases filed over 'inappropriate' posts on social media since 2023

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Minister G. Parameshwara in the Legislative Council.

As many as 2,019 cases, including 676 *suo motu* cases, have been filed over spreading lies or communal hatred on social media in the State since 2023.

Responding to a question from BJP member K.S. Naveen on the action taken against social media users spreading lies and hatred, Home Minister G. Parameshwara told the Council that the government has taken various steps to prevent misuse of social media. This included use of fact checker app, creating desks in all police stations to monitor online media, individuals and organisations, he said, adding that a social media monitoring cell has been established in every police station.

While 238 cases and 373 cases were filed by the police *suo motu* in 2023 and 2024, respectively, 65 cases have been filed in 2025 so far. With respect to complaints received by police about social media posts, 640 cases and 618 cases have been filed in 2023 and 2024, respectively, and 85 cases in 2025.

Dr. Parameshwara said that a separate vertical headed by a DGP had been set up to look at cybercrime, narcotics, and economic offences. "Besides cases on social media posts, police are battling an average of 22,000 cases annually, and the number is going up."

Clash in Council over agencies hired to evaluate guarantees

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Leader of the Opposition Chalavadi Narayanaswamy

After clashing in the Legislative Assembly over spending on monitoring guarantee schemes, the Congress and the Opposition BJP and JD(S) members clashed again briefly in the Council on Thursday over hiring companies to evaluate the guarantees without calling for tenders.

JD(S) member T.A. Sharavana accused the government of not reporting payments made to Write People, that has been hired to implement, evaluate and manage guarantee schemes at a cost of ₹9.25 crore without calling tenders. This is apart from the third-party agencies that have been hired for crores of rupees, allegedly also without calling for a tender. "The exemption given under 4G of the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act is for emergency purpose. What was the emergency in this case," he asked. According to CM Siddaramaiah's reply placed in the House in his absence, Bengaluru-based M2M Media Network was given the task of evaluating Shakti, Gruhalakshmi, Anna Bhagya, and Gruha Jyothi schemes during 2023-24.

The Fiscal Policy Institute asked Mumbai-based XKDR Forum, Prabha Koteshwaran of Kings College, London, Tara Krishnaswamy of Indus Action, Azim Premji University, and JustJobs Network to evaluate the guarantees. While M2M Media received ₹1.12 crore, XKDR got a contract worth ₹1.03 crore for three reports, of which two have been submitted. The reports are being reviewed, and no money has been paid to XKDR so far. There has been no monetary transaction with the others.

Leader of the Opposition Chalavadi Narayanaswamy questioned the need to have a guarantee implementation committee on which ₹60 crore is being spent when private agencies have been hired to monitor the schemes.

When Mr. Sharavana entered the well in protest, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said: "Some agencies have been given responsibility to check if money is reaching beneficiaries. Implementation committee is a political call. If you want to stall the House, we have no objection. You do your politics, and we will do ours." He denied allegations that the government had paid ₹9.25 crore to a company and not revealed details.

Greater Bengaluru Bill passed again

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Following minor changes such as nomination of members to ward committees through lottery system, the Legislative Assembly once again passed the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024, on Thursday.

Following changes suggested to the Bill in the Upper House, and members of the lower house, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar moved the Bill in the Assembly and said a couple of changes have been incorporated.

Mr. Shivakumar said as many people would like to become members of ward committees, it was proposed to adopt the lottery system to pick members to ward committees of the city corporations.

The Bill proposed to split Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike into a maximum of seven city corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area. The Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University (Amendment) Bill was passed and it changed the nomenclature of the university as Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University.

MLAs of coastal districts seek ₹1,000-crore special package

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Someshwara Beach near Mangaluru. Funds have been sought for development of rain-damaged roads and to tap temple tourism, beach tourism, and eco-tourism in the three coastal districts. FILE PHOTO

The BJP and Congress members on Thursday demanded that the government allocate ₹1,000 crore for the Karnataka Coastal Development Authority for development of rain-damaged roads, and other infrastructure, and to tap temple tourism, beach tourism, and eco-tourism in an integrated manner in three districts.

They urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to declare Tulu as the official language of Karnataka by adopting a report submitted by a committee headed by Mohan Alva, founder of Alva's Education Foundation, Moodabidri, in the State Cabinet.

V. Sunil Kumar (BJP) began the debate on the coastal region and its problems and appealed to the government to allocate annual funds in the State Budget for the coastal region like it allocated Budget for the Kalyana-Karnataka region every year.

While most of the debates took place around the Nanjundappa Committee report on regional imbalances, the government silently ignored the problems faced by the coastal region people, he said. No allocation has been proposed in the Budget for the Paschima Vahini project for construction of vetted dams and store water flowing in west-flowing rivers of coastal districts.

The project was conceived after the Yettinahole project would reduce flow of water to coastal districts, he said.

Mr. Kumar urged the government to take steps for merging the Konkan Railway with the Indian Railways or allocation of funds in the State Budget for development of railway stations in the region. The government should recommend to the Centre to relax CRZ rules to allow construction of buildings within 50-m from the CRZ boundary like in Goa and Kerala and modify policy for sand extraction.

Three sanctuaries

Mr. Kumar said three wildlife sanctuaries in the region - Kudremukh, Mookambika and Someshwara - have restricted the movement of people and denied poor people the right to construction of their houses and livelihood. The government should take delegation to the Centre to relax norms in areas around these sanctuaries, he said.

Ashok Rai (Congress) urged for more quota for locals in PSUs such as MRPL, NMPT, and Mangaluru International Airport.

Harish Poonja demanded setting up of a High Court Bench in Mangaluru and development of beach tourism for addressing unemployment issues. Bharat Shetty highlighted the drugs menace around educational institutions.

‘Instead of accusing Gen Z of lacking skills or discipline, we need to ask what drives them’

Arun Rajamani, Managing Director of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, South Asia, spoke about the critical skills that need to be imparted to people to be part of a global workforce

INTERVIEW

Arun Rajamani

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

India has been staring at a severe unemployment crisis with about 24 million out of the 556 million labour force being unemployed. A recent report titled India’s Graduate Skill Index 2025 showed that only 42.6 per cent of Indian graduates are employable, hinting at troubling trends and highlighting the need for better skilling of people.

At a recent event held in the city, Cambridge University Press & Assessment launched an advisory panel comprising leaders from top global corporations, aiming to bridge the employability gap in India and better align academic output with industry needs. A whitepaper released at the event highlighted the growing importance of communication skills, the need for stronger collaboration between industry and universities, and strategies to bridge the persistent skill gap.

Arun Rajamani, Managing Director of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, South Asia, spoke to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the event about the critical skills that need to be imparted to people to be part of a global workforce, the many persisting challenges that could be addressed with industry-academia collaboration and the paradox of abundance of talent and rising unemployability.

Can you give us an overview of the challenges the Indian workforce face in terms of skills?
India is looking at a great opportunity on account of its demographic dividend over the next several years. It’s a workforce that will truly take on global roles and create global impact. The biggest challenge of this workforce is the lack of their relevant skills today.

There are four clusters of skills today. Domain is one of them. The other ones are skills related to adaptability, interpersonal skills and skills related to how cognitively people can move forward. Three of them, together play a bigger role in a person’s success and ability to work in a global workforce as compared to just the domain skills.

The academia today is unable to define how these four skills can come in equal measure or in good measure. This is where organisations like Cambridge could be that bridge between industry, academia and future workforce by bringing the three together and perhaps include policymakers at some level to see how these problems could be solved.

How do you bridge this gap?
There have been some interesting recommendations coming in from the industry in terms of actions, including understanding what the Gen Z’s expectations are.

Often people are keen to accuse that Gen Z does not have certain skills, they don’t have the discipline, they don’t have the ability and so on. But it is what it is. This is the next generation of the workforce. How many times have we gone back to them asking what they need or what drives them or what motivates them.

So, this is an opportunity for us to understand what their expectations, see how we could fine tune the expectations on both sides and then find out how they could become an integral part of our solutioning. So, that will be one of the bridges.

Studies have proven that cognitive capabilities improve when students are able to master multiple languages, says Arun Rajamani. AP

Launch of the white paper at the Bridging Industry & Academia Expectations Conference. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The other part is also to empower the faculty members because things are changing so much in the industry and the faculty also needs to keep pace with that. So, we are also looking at how Cambridge, the partners and academia work together in terms of addressing some of those challenges.

Do you think the existing education system should be tweaked to meet the needs of the future workforce?
Absolutely yes. The government is taking measures to fix the school education system through the national education policy and the reforms that are underway to ensure that skills are taught in equal measure compared to knowledge. This includes communication skills, other critical thinking skills and curiosity skills. It’s a very good measure for the long term. But in the current term, how do we empower this generation to be successful? That’s where we need to figure out shorter term solutions within the higher education term or the tenure that the students are going through. And we have only four years.

There are practical problems. A number of graduates today are first time graduates in their family. Many of them might have studied in vernacular medium schools in their hometowns, their parents and relatives may not be English-speaking and there is a probability that their communication skills are limited. Changing that is not an easy task. This needs deep rooted tactical interventions, and the government is attempting that through its Skill India Mission.

We have an active part there to ensure that we are able to empower people with skills in communication. If the industry, academia, government policy makers and the skills programmes come together, short term solutions can be implemented while we think about the longer-term solutions.

Given that English language and communication skills are going to be critical to build a global workforce, wouldn’t NEP’s strong push in terms of making regional language the medium of instruction in schools pose a hindrance?
I think it’s complementing in nature. Studies after studies have proven that cognitive capabilities improve when students are able to master multiple languages. Inherently as a race and as a nation, we have had an advantage because of our multi diverse culture and languages. Most of us can speak at least two languages, if not read and write. I think that’s the added dimension today that increases the success rates of Indians in the global workforce. So, what the government is doing is to ensure that there is equal focus on the vernacular or the mother tongue as well as English skills. English skills are no longer a privilege to have, it’s a necessity.

Arun Rajamani

Therefore, there is also the realization that you need to have bridge programmes between vernacular to English. The NEP recommends up to grade eight the choice to either study in English or in the mother tongue. But grade nine onwards, it ensures that you move to an English medium of instruction. This is the bridge that’s the most difficult to cross.

If bilingual education is offered in the right way in schools, this transition path will be much easier. But how do you then empower students who have not gone through the transition path? That’s a problem that the skills initiatives are likely to solve.

NEP advocates for regional language as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, and preferably until Grade 8. But to be a part of the future global workforce, wouldn’t English as a medium of instruction from earlier on help?
It will. But then again, we have to be sensitive to the fact that many of them may not have that privilege. So having good, structured, equitable bridging plans are important to help them transition. You need very focused interventions that are rapid, quick and effective for them to learn English. Technology can play a very big role. It’s also important that the programmes must be accessible, affordable and impactful. This is where players like Cambridge come in. We come in with a mastery of how language can be taught. The industry understands the needs very well and the way jobs are shifting in terms of skill sets. So, by bringing Cambridge, academia and industry coming together, we can figure out the most effective solutions.

What would be the nature of these interventions or solutions?
Interventions could look at how do you change the existing curriculum or how do you adapt curriculum in a better way, how do you impact the capability of faculty members, how do you bring in more experts and practitioners into the curriculum framework, how do you bring industry to offer internships on both sides, and so on. We will have to work on making these into working programmes.

There is a lot of conversation around the abundance of talent in India. But at the same time, we also have a huge unemployed problem currently in the country. Do you see this as a paradox?
I would rather focus on the opportunity here. I think we have the opportunity to shape one of the most resilient workforces in the future, with skills that could make them globally relevant, successful and with an ability to drive the most amount of innovation.

Women hold just one in five blue-collar jobs; wage gap and career barriers persist: Says study

Retail, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, construction and real estate, and travel and hospitality sectors show increase female representation

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Women in India’s blue-collar workforce hold just one in five jobs, according to the latest survey by Indeed, a job matching and hiring platform. Despite increasing hiring intent, challenges ranging from wage disparities to poor sanitation continue to hold women back.

According to the survey, while 73% of the surveyed employers said they hired women for blue-collar roles in 2024, female participation remained stagnant at 20% across the country.

The study covered 2,673 blue-collar women workers and 1,262 employers across 14 industries, including automobile, BFSI, e-commerce, travel & hospitality, FMCG, and manufacturing. The cities surveyed included Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Chandigarh, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

Himanshi, a certified remote pilot trained under the government-backed ‘Drone Sister’ programme, pouring liquid fertiliser into a drone, to spray it over a farm in Pataudi. AFP

Industries such as retail (32%), healthcare and pharmaceuticals (32%), construction and real estate (30%), and travel and hospitality (28%) showed increase female representation. However, telecommunications, BFSI, and IT/ITeS lagged behind, with female participation below 10%.

During the survey, 78% of employers revealed plans to hire more women in blue-collar roles in 2025, an encouraging 5% increase in hiring intent compared to the 73% in 2024. Industries like retail (94%), healthcare and pharma (93%), and e-commerce (93%) showed the strongest demand.

Harsh realities
As per the survey, while more women are seeking blue-collar jobs primarily for financial independence (70%), workplace realities remain harsh. It identified three major challenges that continue to push women to the margins. These were rigid work schedules, wage inequality and lack of upskilling opportunities.

More than half of the surveyed women cited a lack of flexible shifts as a barrier. Several blue-collar jobs often demanded strict shift timings, making it difficult for women to balance work and personal responsibilities.

Around 42% of women reported being underpaid compared to their male counterparts, with fewer opportunities for promotions. In industries like automobile, FMCG, and travel & hospitality, more than half of the women surveyed felt their wages did not reflect their work.

Every second woman surveyed preferred upskilling, but access to relevant training remained a challenge.

The employer perspective
On the other side, the employers cited a ‘limited talent pool’ (52%) and high attrition as major obstacles. While women workers’ critical workplace expectations include healthcare benefits, such as insurance and paid medical leave, the employers reported rising healthcare costs as a challenge.

Sashi Kumar, Head of Sales, Indeed India, said, “Our report highlights a pressing reality – 71% of women in blue-collar jobs feel undervalued. Not because they lack ambition, but because job opportunities and growth pathways are limited. While businesses are making efforts to hire more women, true progress depends on better retention strategies, career growth opportunities, and policies that ensure financial security, flexibility, and healthcare. Employers must invest in skilling, mentorship, and leadership pipelines tailored for blue-collar women. Increasing women’s participation today is more than just about diversity, it’s an economic necessity.”

According to another survey by Indeed, India’s blue-collar sector is expected to see more than 2 million job seekers in 2025.

According to the company, “The real measure of progress will not just be how many women join the workforce, but how industries take decisive action to break systemic barriers, ensure fair wages, and provide women with the flexibility and career mobility they need to thrive.”

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 14, 1975

Probe on Official’s Action: Karnataka CM’s Assurance

Bangalore, March 13. The Chief Minister, Mr. D. Devaraj Urs, told the Karnataka Assembly today that the Chief Secretary who was enquiring into the alleged omission by the Additional Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of Public Works Department to include in an order the Government’s decision to prosecute a private engineering firm for suspected fraud had given his preliminary report and he had been asked to expedite the enquiry.

Making a detailed statement on the controversy which had gripped the House for two days, before the Shivarathri recess, the Chief Minister pointed out that he was anxious as anybody else to see that the matter was looked into in detail.

Engg. firm scandal: Charge Against Urs

Bangalore, March 13: The Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde said the Chief Minister, Mr. Devaraj Urs was involved in the affair concerning a private engineering firm which was accused of fraudulent transactions.

If this is not true, what is the reason for the Chief Minister to have undue interest in the firms”? he asked in the Council.

Mr. Hegde said the technical cell of the State Vigilance Commission in December 1972 had reported that Nirmala Engineering Company had played fraud on the Government in some of the contract works entrusted to it and had urged the Government to launch criminal proceedings.

Karnataka InFocus

THE HINDU

IN SHORT

National recognition for institute

AIISH has been conferred the National Award for its outstanding contribution to the welfare of persons with disabilities. President Droupadi Murmu recently presented the award to AIISH Director M. Pushpavathi in New Delhi. AIISH stood out for its exemplary service in the rehabilitation, education, and treatment of persons with disabilities.

An unmatched leader in the area

AIISH Mysuru was founded in 1965 for human resource development, research, clinical services, and public education in the field of communication disorders. What began as a small institution in 1965, the institute has today developed into one of the premier establishments of the government of India across South Asia in the field of speech and hearing.

Clinical, research and outreach centres

The Centre of Excellence at the AIISH consists of 11 state-of-the-art centres - clinical, research and outreach - catering to the needs of persons with communication disorders. It houses the modern facilities, serving the needs of the speech and hearing impaired under one roof. Funded by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, it costed around ₹155.49 crore.

A programme to create awareness

AIISH Arogya Vani is an orientation programme that aims to create awareness among the general public on various communication disorders and to shed light on the prevention and early identification of disorders such as hearing impairment, speech problems, stammering, autism, learning disabilities, voice problems, etc. in both children and adults.

Students from various institutions

To drive innovations, the Centre of Rehabilitation Engineering, Acoustics, and Biomedical Engineering, AIISH brought together passionate students from various technical institutions recently for creating prototypes, software applications, and smart solutions in assistive technologies for tackling the real-world challenges and improving the lives of people.

The challenge of 'hidden disability'

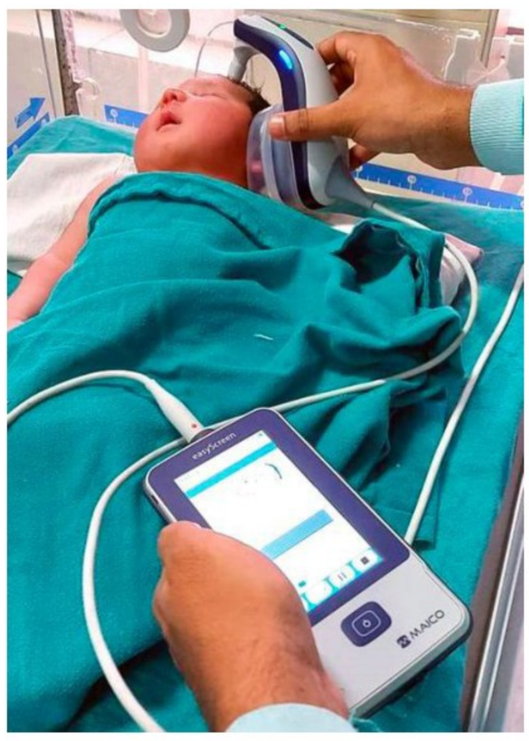
With the launch of the Newborn Hearing Screening programme by the Mysuru-based All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, laying emphasis on early identification of hearing loss in newborns, nearly 6,000 are screened almost every month to detect hearing loss issues among infants

Shankar Bennur
MYSURU

As late identification of hearing problems among the newborns can result in permanent hearing loss, early screening is being done on a priority, with the Mysuru-based All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH), a premier institute in the field of speech and hearing under the Union Ministry of Health and Family, successfully running Newborn Screening (NBS) programme for communication disorders for early identification of hearing loss in infants.

Under the NBS, newborns are screened for communication disorders before they are discharged from the hospital. For this, AIISH has collaborated with several hospitals to conduct screening which is performed to detect hearing impairment and other developmental disabilities that can affect speech and language development. The screening has been helping in early intervention for those identified with the disorders, as any delay in the identification poses risk and affects successful management of children with hearing loss, according to AIISH.

AIISH has been running campaigns for early interventions and joined hands with various hospitals in Mysuru and elsewhere in the State, besides select locations in the country. "Children born with hearing loss will not develop speech since they don't hear it and therefore early interventions are a must," said experts at AIISH here.



A newborn baby is being screened at a hospital under the AIISH's Newborn Hearing Screening programme.

Many hospitals in Mysuru are collaborating with the AIISH for newborn screening. SPECIAL ARRRANGEMENT

AIISH Mysuru has been stressing on early identification and intervention on hearing issues among infants.

First three crucial years

According to AIISH, the first three years of life is the most crucial period for acquiring speech and language skills. Babies acquire speech and language from the time they are born, and one of the ways they learn is through hearing. If they have any problem with hearing and/or other disorders they may have delayed speech and language development, it explains.

As part of NBS, over 60,000 infants are screened every year using the state-of-art technology within seven days of their birth at the identified hospitals. The newborns who did not pass the screening test were evaluated in detail within two months of their birth to confirm the presence of hearing loss.

However, recent data from the NBS programme has caused an alarm as approximately five in every 1,000 babies are born with hearing loss daily, and for about two of these infants, the hearing loss is permanent. "Over 95% of hearing loss cases stem from damage to the inner ear, which often is not visible to the naked eye. It is called a hidden disability," explains AIISH's audiologists Indira C.P. and Dr. Sandeep M., from the Department of Prevention of Communication Disorders.

The only reliable methods for detecting hearing loss in newborns are objective tests like otoacoustic emissions (OAE) and auditory brainstem responses (ABR). Without these tests, hearing loss may go undetected, preventing children from developing speech. It is scientifically well-established that early intervention is crucial, they explain.

The 1-3-6 rule

The 1-3-6 rule recommends that all newborns undergo hearing loss screening at one month of age. At-risk infants should have a diagnostic assessment at three months, and intervention should start at six months. "Following these timelines will help children with hearing loss develop speech and communication skills on par with their hearing peers," the audiologists advice, highlighting the criticality of early identification of hearing loss in infants.

However, the AIISH, citing the global standards which prescribe that hearing loss should be confirmed by two months of age and treated by three months of age, says that the age of identification in India is late (beyond 3 years). It is said based on the reports that less than 1% of newborns in India are screened for hearing loss.

By the time parents notice signs of hearing difficulties such as a lack of response to sounds, it is often too late. This leads to significant developmental challenges for the child and puts an immense burden of hearing disability on the family and society, according to experts at AIISH.

Consequently, AIISH has joined hands with the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka, to educate the medical teams working under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) and District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC) on early screening of communication disorders in children.

Infants are screened for speech, language and hearing disorders within a few days of their birth at bedside in over 20 hospitals in Mysuru city and 30 outreach service centres under NBS. Each month, more than 6,000 newborns are screened through the programme and children at risk for speech, language and hearing disorders are identified well within one month of their birth.

What earlier data said

Earlier data said about 3 in 1,000 newborns are known to have permanent hearing loss. But, the recent data says it is five in 1,000 newborns. The infants typically won't have any overt signs due to which the hearing loss goes undetected unless a hearing screening test is conducted. It is important to know that hearing loss can be accurately identified right at birth through audiological tests, the institute said in a note during the expansion of NBS.

AIISH collaborated with District Early Intervention Center (DEIC), Mysuru, with the purpose of carrying out newborn screening in the taluk hospitals on a quarterly basis. The AIISH's team of experts would visit the taluk hospitals on that day to conduct newborn screening and identify at-risk infants. The DEIC team brings the infants born in the last three months to the taluk hospitals on a specified day and the AIISH team would visit the taluk hospitals on that day to conduct newborn screening and identify at-risk infants.

The Department of Prevention of Communication Disorders at AIISH, which is coordinating the ongoing efforts, is dedicated for outreach activities, conducting newborn hearing screening, hearing screening for industrial workers, screening for ear and hearing disorders in schoolchildren, hearing screening for elderly, as its routine activities.

With these efforts, more infants and geographical regions are being benefited by the NBS programme. Those identified through the screening programme are treated either in DEIC or AIISH as per the convenience of the patients.

How tests are done

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

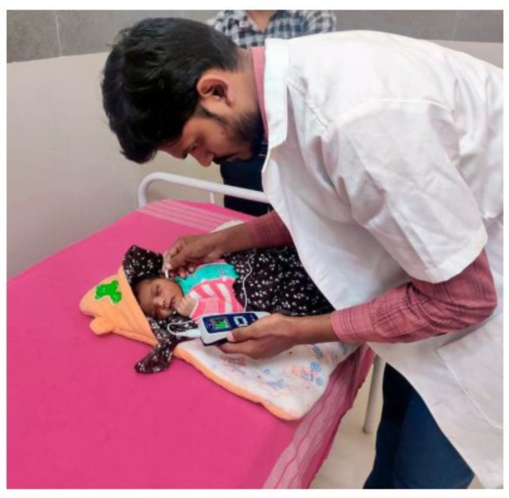
The newborn screening tests are done by experts at AIISH, Mysuru, in three stages - screening, assessment and rehabilitation and sensitisation.

They identify those at risk for communication disorders by screening every newborn for hearing impairment and other developmental disabilities, using state-of-the-art technologies.

A team of experts, including audiologists, speech-language pathologists and ENT specialists carry out the tests to detect newborns at-risk. If the newborn has no risk factors, passing all the tests, then the screening is considered complete, according to the Department of Prevention of Communication Disorders, AIISH.

However, if the infants are identified as at-risk, then they undergo assessment and rehabilitation, and further management by the experts and doctors. Re-screening is done only when the newborn does not pass the screen for certain reasons. The AIISH's team has been sensitising and educating parents and caregivers to support them in detecting late onset disorders, details accessed from the department said.

Cases are referred to speech and language therapy in at-risk newborns since early intervention is key for the children to overcome the impairment, according to AIISH.



Audiologists at AIISH use the latest technologies for early identification of hearing issues among the infants. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

All India Institute of Speech and Hearing in Mysuru. FILE PHOTO

Panel probing '40% commission' charge looked into 1,729 files

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Retired judge Nagamohan Das submits 20,000-page report to Siddaramaiah

The commission headed by retired High Court judge H.N. Nagamohan Das, which submitted a 20,000-page report to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on the allegations of '40% commission' during the previous BJP regime, looked into 1,729 files from departments encompassing 31 districts of the State.

The commission also submitted a separate report on the alleged irregularities in cost estimation pertaining to the modernisation of the right bank canal of the Narayanapur dam.

Between 2019 and 2023

According to sources, the panel investigated works completed by contractors between 2019 and 2023. The total cost of these works was pegged at ₹3.5 lakh crore. The files also contained five categories of work – below ₹5 lakh, ₹5 lakh-₹50 lakh, ₹50 lakh-₹1 crore, ₹1 crore-₹50 crore, and ₹50 crore and above. The commission has found merit in the allegations levelled by the contractors.

The files for the probe were chosen scientifically with the assistance of the Bureau of Statistics and Programme Implementation, sources said. The commission was entrusted to look into irregularities and misappropriation in the departments of Public Works, Minor Irrigation, Major Irrigation, Urban Development, and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

An official privy to the probe told *The Hindu* that the commission used a three-dimensional approach – file verification, spot inspection, and investigation into accounts. The official said the panel collected grievances from the general public and contractors as part of the probe. The commission found that many contractors were selectively eliminated from the tender process at the first stage after submission of required documents. This was a flawed approach by the departments, he said.

"We found that the allegations were partly true. The commission also gave a slew of recommendations to the government for streamlining the system," the official said.

The commission also submitted a 1,800-page report on the alleged irregularities in the cost estimation of modernisation in the Narayanapur dam. The probe found merit in the allegations. The panel worked for nearly 14 months to prepare this report. The commission will complete the report on works pertaining to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike in about two months. "Nearly 50% of the probe is completed," the official said.

Delimitation a conspiracy against South, says Revanth

Telangana CM says the exercise is Centre's revenge on the Southern States for not allowing BJP to claim power, and adds he will attend the Joint Action Committee meet in Chennai on March 22

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy termed the delimitation exercise as a 'limitation for South India', labelled it as a conspiracy against the Southern States.

He expressed the views on Thursday after a delegation of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham (DMK) party led by Tamil Nadu Municipal Administration Minister K.N. Nehru handed over a letter written by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inviting him for a meeting of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) scheduled to be held in Chennai on March 22 over the delimitation process.

Teaming up: DMK leaders handing over M.K. Stalin's letter inviting A. Revanth Reddy for a meeting on March 22. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Reddy said that Centre's 'conspiracy' should be exposed and thwarted and termed the entire exercise of the BJP as a revenge on the Southern States for not allowing the party claim power.

Assuring that he would personally attend the meeting in Chennai with Congress party high command's permission, Mr. Revanth Reddy warned that Southern States would not tolerate any attempts to reduce their importance in national politics. He added that BJP doesn't have much representation in the South and it wants to reduce South's importance.

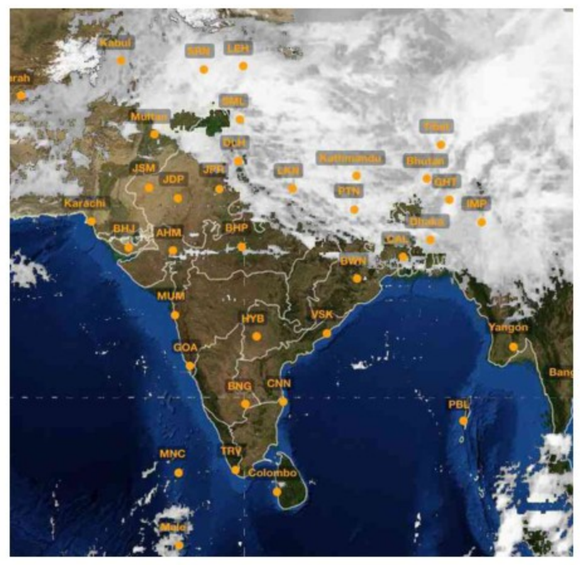
All-party meeting

Mr. Revanth Reddy also said that the Telangana government has called for an all-party meeting to discuss the delimitation of the constituencies.

In his letter to Mr. Revanth, Mr. Stalin stated that although there were provisions that the redistribution of constituencies should not be carried out until the census is conducted after 2026, the Centre had raked up issue out of it much before that.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Muzaffarabad and Arunachal Pradesh. Hailstorm likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Heat wave conditions likely at isolated places over Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Vidarbha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	33.6	23.6	Kozhikode	3	36.0	25.5
Ahmedabad	—	39.6	22.5	Kurnool	—	40.1	25.0
Aizawl	—	33.5	16.7	Lucknow	—	33.5	18.7
Allahabad	—	36.3	18.0	Madurai	—	35.1	22.1
Bengaluru	—	34.7	20.7	Mangaluru	—	34.2	21.6
Bhopal	—	37.0	21.0	Mumbai	—	34.9	24.0
Bhubaneswar	—	38.2	23.2	Mysuru	—	38.0	21.0
Chandigarh	—	31.8	17.6	New Delhi	—	34.4	18.6
Chennai	—	35.0	24.6	Patna	—	34.4	20.8
Coimbatore	—	35.0	22.0	Port Blair	—	34.0	24.9
Dehradun	—	30.9	16.1	Puducherry	—	32.9	24.2
Gangtok	14	14.5	10.6	Pune	—	40.0	23.0
Goa	—	35.0	26.0	Raipur	—	39.8	23.1
Guwahati	17	25.0	17.4	Ranchi	—	34.2	19.2
Hubballi	—	38.0	21.0	Shillong	—	23.1	12.4
Hyderabad	—	38.0	22.2	Shimla	—	25.1	13.6
Imphal	—	28.8	14.0	Srinagar	11	13.1	7.0
Jaipur	—	35.5	23.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.0	24.2
Kochi	5	32.4	24.8	Tiruchi	—	34.3	22.6
Kohima	3	16.7	10.2	Vijayawada	—	37.2	24.4
Kolkata	—	37.4	25.0	Visakhapatnam	—	32.7	25.3

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO₂	NO₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.75	..80	14	... 121	...109	
Bengaluru	.22	..42	42	... 106	97	
Chennai	.16	..36	75	 22	43	
Delhi	.28	..50	21	... 276	...276	
Hyderabad	...6	..97	..6	... 162	...115	
Kolkata	...8	..13	26	... 106	98	
Lucknow	.11	..65	60	... 155	...159	
Mumbai	..—	..85	32	... 177	...121	
Pune	..—	114	56	... 225	...114	
Visakhapatnam	...9	..56	23	 57	...108	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Talcher, Odisha recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 280 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Madikeri, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Pinarayi, Satheesan condemn BJP, RSS activists' protest against Tushar Gandhi

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala witnessed a public outcry and protests from both the ruling and the Opposition fronts after a group of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) activists allegedly heckling Tushar Gandhi, the great-grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, near Neyyattinkara, on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday evening. The Neyyattinkara police registered a *suo motu* case against identifiable BJP-RSS workers. The protesters were reportedly irked by Mr. Gandhi, who was in Kerala at the invitation of the Sivagiri Madhom, terming the RSS a cancer on the nation's soul in a speech commemorating the 100th anniversary of Sree Narayana Guru's meeting with Mahatma Gandhi at the madhom.

Tushar Gandhi

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the mentality of the Sangh Parivar workers who were behind the act was no different from that of Gandhi's assassins. "It is an attack on secularism and democracy. Legal and democratic actions will be taken against such acts," he said.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan condemned the RSS' action. "The RSS has put Kerala to shame and revealed their true colours as a revanchist force," he said.

HC castigates govt., Rani Channamma varsity 'for playing with life of teacher'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government "wants to play with the life of a teacher" who had served the government for 34 years, the High Court of Karnataka observed, while castigating the government and Rani Channamma University, Belagavi, for dodging payment of full terminal benefits to a retired professor even 10 years after his retirement merely on the question who has to pay the retirement benefits.

"It is ununderstandable as to why the petitioner, despite working for 34 years, has not been paid complete pension as also leave encashment and gratuity amounts. The State wants to play with the life of the petitioner. He is now 70 years old having retired 10 years ago and has been fighting for grant of his terminal benefits," the court observed.

While pulling up both the university and the government for compelling the retired professor to knock the doors of the court multiple times, Justice M. Nagaprasanna directed the government and the university to pay entire terminal benefits to petitioner, M.A. Dhavaleshwar, a retired principal of Sangolli Rayanna First Grade College, Belagavi, within four weeks along with 6% interest.

The court noted that he had filed a petition in 2020 for non-payment of a single rupee as retirement benefit even though he retired in 2015 and the court had directed the government to pay all the terminal benefits. As court's 2020 order was not honoured, he had filed a contempt of court petition and this has yielded part payment of around ₹15 lakh to him. As around ₹30 lakh is still not paid, he filed the present petition in 2022.

Who is to pay?

The only reason for non-payment of retirement benefits was due to dispute between the government and the university on the question as to who has to pay the retirement benefits as the government college, in which petitioner was serving, was absorbed as a constituent college of the university three years prior to his retirement.

The court said that the government and the varsity will have to pay the remaining amount to him along with 9% interest from the date of his retirement, if they failed to pay the amount with 6% interest within four weeks. He is also entitled for ₹1,000 per day for every day's delay in payment after four weeks, the court said.

Five MLC candidates of NDA declared elected unopposed

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Election Commission of India (EC) declared five candidates of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) as elected unopposed to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council in the MLA quota on Thursday.

They are TDP's Beeda Ravi Chandra, B. Tirumala Naidu (sitting MLC) and Kavali Greeshma, JSP's K. Nagendra Rao (Nagababu) and BJP's Somu Veerraju.

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) stood no chance of winning even one of the five vacant seats as it lacked the requisite number of MLAs to vote.

The YSRCP has only 11 MLAs in the 175-member Assembly. Returning Officer R. Vanitha Rani announced their election as no other nominations were filed by March 10 which was the last date, and they remained in the fray till the end of the time (March 13).

The notification for the biennial election was issued by the EC on February 24 and the election is to be held on March 20.

Four seats are due to become vacant on March 29 on account of the retirement of Duvvarapu Rama Rao, Paruchuri Ashok Babu, B. Tirumala Naidu and Yanamala Ramakrishnudu. The seat of Janga Krishna Murthy has been vacant since May 15, 2024.

INBRIEF

Debris removal intensified using robot in last 50 metres

The rescue teams working on tracing the remaining seven persons trapped under the debris in the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel in Telangana have intensified the work with the induction of an autonomous hydraulic-powered sludge removal robot towards the last 50 metres of the end rock. According to officials heading the rescue operation, the rescue teams have cleared debris till the last 50 metres from the tunnel end and the metal parts of the tunnel boring machine are being cut into pieces by the technicians from South Central Railway.

Headmaster punishes himself for students' performance

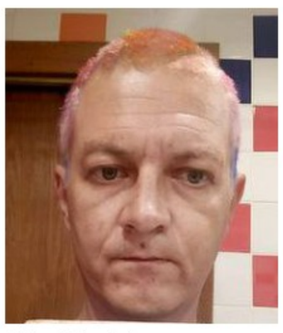
A government school headmaster in Andhra Pradesh caught public attention by punishing himself for the students' poor academic performance. Headmaster Chinta Ramana did sit-ups continuously after expressing his agony about the poor performance of the students in the backdrop of the beginning of the Class 10 examinations. He said that he punished himself as teachers were not allowed to punish the children even if they made mistakes repeatedly. Minister Nara Lokesh responded on X and hailed Mr. Ramana's commitment to improving students' academic performance.

Social activist and writer K.K. Kochu passes away

Dalit thinker, writer, and social activist K.K. Kochu passed away in Kottayam on Thursday. He had been battling illness for a long time and was undergoing treatment at Government Medical College Hospital here. He was a prominent figure in Kerala's Dalit progressive movement. He was honoured with the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for his comprehensive body of work in 2021. His autobiography *Dalithan* is regarded as a landmark work.

Fugitive Lithuanian held, to be brought to court tomorrow

Sarath Babu George
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Aleksej Besciokov. PTI

A three-day covert search operation at Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram led the Kerala Police to apprehend Aleksej Besciokov, a Lithuanian national on Wednesday.

He was wanted by the U.S. for allegedly running a money laundering racket. Mr. Besciokov, 46, a resident of Russia, had been vacationing in Varkala for nearly a month.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted Mr. Besciokov and Aleksandr Mira Serda, 40, a Russian national living in the UAE, for operating the cryptocurrency exchange 'Garantex'. He is currently in prison and will be produced before the Patiala House Court on March 15. According to a CBI release, Mr. Besciokov is wanted to face trial before the United States District Court.

Braving intense heat in Kerala, devotees converge for sacred Attukal Pongala

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Braving the heat and with unwavering devotion, many women gathered on Thursday to partake in the Attukal Pongala ritual, making offerings to the presiding deity of the Attukal Bhagavathy temple.

The air was filled with the fragrance of traditional offerings as the vibrant festival unfolded, showcasing the profound faith, cultural richness and community spirit that define one of Kerala's most iconic religious celebrations.

The festival began with a ceremony as the chief priest V. Muraleedharan Namboodiri lit the hearth in front of the temple. Thousands of women set up their own hearths along the streets, cooking rice mixed with jaggery as an offering to the deity.

Devotees offering Pongala outside the Attukal Bhagavathy temple in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas, who attended the event, highlighted the significance of Pongala in the State's religious calendar.

Thiruvananthapuram Mayor Arya Rajendran said the Corporation has incrementally introduced a green protocol to prevent plastic littering. She pointed out that women devotees increasingly used steel plates and glasses instead of plastic plates and cups.

The Pongala festival concluded peacefully, although a few minor occurrences were reported. The Kerala Fire and Rescue Services responded to one fire-related emergency and 66 other incidents, mostly related to devotees developing uneasiness due to the heat.

A 65-year-old devotee, Rajeswari from Ernakulam, collapsed and died while offering pongala on Gandhari Amman Kovil Road in Thampanoor. Despite being rushed to hospital, her life could not be saved.

Acceptable contrast

A buoyancy in the real economy could provide long-term relief

Three sets of data – January's industrial production, February's retail inflation and the performance of mutual funds in February – present a contrast between India's real economy and the financial markets, that is both concerning and heartening. In the real economy, February's 3.61% retail inflation is a seven-month low aided by a steady and welcome fall in food inflation, which had reached a 15-month high of 10.87% last October. February's food inflation, which is a barometer of people's spending on monthly groceries, fell to an almost two-year low of 3.75%. This would come as a relief to India's policymakers who had hoped for a spike in consumption demand to buttress the government's full year GDP growth target of 6.5% for the 2025 financial year. February's 3.61% retail inflation is also well within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) medium-term 4% inflation target, signalling a probable, albeit much-needed, repo rate cut at a time when there has been a liquidity squeeze in the domestic financial system due to the worrisome flight of foreign investors as they hedge against a depreciating rupee, the U.S.'s proposed tariffs-induced inflation and global uncertainties.

The RBI's February 7 0.25 basis point repo rate cut, from 6.50% to 6.25%, after a gap of five years, signalled the central bank's intent to raise capital flows in the real economy, to spur economic activity while continuing to focus on inflation moderation. Amid the ₹1.7 trillion liquidity squeeze in the banking system due to the flight of foreign portfolio and institutional investors, the RBI conducted two tranches of dollar/rupee swap auctions, with another one slated for later this month. This is expected to inject over ₹2 trillion into the banking system to address long-term liquidity concerns. Despite such concerns in the financial system, January's industrial production print at an eight-month high of 5%, up from December's 3.55%, is another indicator of the resilience in the real economy, as growth was led by an increase in the output of primary, intermediate, and infrastructure and construction goods. Meanwhile, the panic among retail investors was palpable from the February equity mutual funds (MF) reporting numbers. Inflows into MFs plunged 27% with the fourth month of declining stock returns. Retail investors, largely from the salaried middle and upper-middle classes, had flocked to the stock markets post COVID-19, but fresh Systematic Investment Plans dipped to 44.6 lakh, the lowest in the fiscal year. Therefore, while the volatility in the financial markets could be worrisome, but temporary, the buoyancy in the real economy makes the hit bearable.

Old ties, new priorities

The Modi visit to Mauritius focused on present-day imperatives

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mauritius this week, and his meeting with its newly elected Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam, marked a decade since his last visit. His trip aimed to strengthen the India-Mauritius strategic partnership and launch new economic and development initiatives. While Mr. Ramgoolam's previous tenure (2005-14) overlapped briefly with Mr. Modi's, the two leaders have maintained close ties. Even during India's strict COVID-19 lockdown, the Indian government facilitated Mr. Ramgoolam's medical evacuation to India. Acknowledging this support, Mr. Ramgoolam warmly welcomed Mr. Modi as a guest at Mauritius' National Day celebrations where he was also conferred the highest national award. Though not India's closest geographical neighbour, Mauritius remains deeply connected to India. Over 70% of Mauritians are of Indian descent, with enduring cultural ties to India. While Mr. Modi's engagements highlighted these shared historical and cultural bonds, the visit was primarily focused on strategic priorities. India seeks to strengthen its partnership with Mauritius as a key player in the Indian Ocean, an African nation, and a link to the Global South.

As part of this deepening partnership, the two leaders upgraded their strategic ties and committed to increased defence cooperation. India also announced several major economic initiatives, that include bilateral trade in national currencies, support for a new Mauritius parliament building, and a ₹487 crore credit facility to improve water infrastructure. These projects build upon previous Indian-led developments, such as an airstrip and jetty in the Agalega islands, the Mauritius Metro rail project, and the New Supreme Court Building. The visit also carried geopolitical implications. Mr. Ramgoolam has expressed a desire to renegotiate Mauritius' agreement with the U.K. regarding sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, home to a U.S. military base in Diego Garcia. While India helped broker the previous deal under Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth's government, it has assured Mr. Ramgoolam of its full support in whatever course he chooses. Meanwhile, India is also watching China's growing footprint. China's strategic partnership with Mauritius includes a free trade agreement and bilateral trade worth $1.1 billion – double that of India-Mauritius trade at $554 million. With the PLA Navy's increased presence in the Indian Ocean, Mr. Modi's announcement of the MAHASAGAR doctrine is significant. At a time when shifting U.S. foreign policy threatens the international rules-based order, disrupts trade, and risks fragmenting global alliances into rigid spheres of influence, Mr. Modi's visit has underscored India's commitment to strengthening regional ties and reinforcing partnerships with trusted friends.

India's choice between progress and parochialism

Ra. Shhiva

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is the co-founder of Citizens for Law and Democracy (CLAD)

Linguistic policies risk undermining India's global and technological ambitions

India stands at a critical juncture, caught between the anvil of technological disruption and the hammer of cultural nationalism. While the Union government champions economic independence and global technological leadership –exemplified by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's co-chairing of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit in Paris in February – its linguistic policies risk undermining these ambitions.

The call by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief recently to reject English, western attire, and customs – echoed by Maharashtra's push for Marathi use/promotion to be mandatory in government offices – reveals a deepening ideological contradiction. English, which is one of India's official languages, and also the de-facto medium of higher education, law, health care, and aspirational jobs, as well as the gateway to global opportunities, remains accessible to just 10% of Indians.

This staggering disparity is not incidental but also a product of political choices, creating two divergent educational tracks: privileged private-school students ride the wave of globalisation, while 65% of India's children in government schools remain shackled by linguistic nationalism. As AI reshapes the future of work, India's reluctance to democratise English risks entrenching a linguistic apartheid, with profound consequences for equity and economic mobility.

The 21st century's defining competition revolves not around military might but human capital. While India debates language as identity, Asian peers treat English as economic infrastructure. Israel, often romanticised by cultural nationalists for its ethnoreligious cohesion, offers an instructive counterpoint. Its technological prowess stems not from cultural isolation but a strategic embrace of global knowledge systems. By mandating English fluency alongside science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, Israel ensures that all its citizens access innovation ecosystems. India's leaders must recognise that empowering citizens through English is not cultural betrayal but strategic necessity.

Language policy, equality meets pragmatism

A nation's language policy must balance equality and economic pragmatism. China, South Korea, and Vietnam now prioritise English proficiency as a mass skill, diverging from earlier elite-centric approaches.

China's mandate, in 2001, to teach English from primary school catalysed its shift from an outsource destination for low-value manufacturing units to a dominant driver in the tech-driven economy. The Gaokao, China's national college entrance examination, is the sole gateway to higher education for over 10 million students annually. English, accounting for 150 points (equal to Chinese and mathematics), is a mandatory component, reflecting its status as a core pillar of human capital strategy. This systemic emphasis ensures that even students from rural provinces gain foundational English skills, aligning with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As the BRI expanded China's global infrastructure footprint, English became critical for diplomats, engineers and project managers interfacing with 140-plus partner nations. State media now explicitly links English proficiency to "telling China's story well", transforming the language from a colonial relic to a soft power tool.

South Korea's Suneung, the college scholastic ability test, is an eight-hour marathon taken by 5,00,000 students yearly. English constitutes 25% of the examination's "mandatory" section, with listening, reading and writing components modelled on global proficiency benchmarks such as TOEFL. This rigour stems from a national consensus: cultural pride (evident in the K-wave's global dominance) need not conflict with linguistic pragmatism. Firms such as Samsung and Hyundai mandate English for research and development roles, while K-pop giants such as BIBI release English tracks to capture western markets. The result? A workforce equally adept at preserving hanbok traditions and negotiating semiconductor export controls – a duality India's cultural nationalists dismiss as untenable.

Vietnam's National Foreign Language Project (NFLP), launched in 2008 and extended to 2030, targets English proficiency for 70% of high school graduates and 100% of civil servants. Unlike India's ad hoc policies, the NFLP integrates teacher training (50,000 educators upskilled), rural digital classrooms, and sector-specific benchmarks (for example, tourism workers must achieve B1 level).

The project's $1.4 billion budget underscores its centrality to Vietnam's goal of becoming a middle-tech manufacturing hub by 2045. From Ho Chi Minh City's AI parks to Da Nang's beachfront startups, English operates as the operating system for foreign direct investment-driven growth.

Crucially, these nations treat English as a utilitarian tool – like coding or calculus – divorced from identity politics.

The AI era's linguistic realities

A recent NITI Aayog report highlights English proficiency as a major barrier to employment, noting it as the biggest contributing factor forcing industries in many States to hire outside talent, forcing industries in many States to hire outside talent. The Future of Jobs Report 2025 from the World Economic Forum underscores English's non-negotiable role: 86% of employers cite AI and data analytics as primary growth drivers, fields where English dominates research, patents, and collaboration. Just as 19th-century industrialisation rewarded nations with coal, progress in the 21st century hinges on technical literacy coupled with linguistic agility. Vietnam's English-proficient semiconductor engineers and South Korea's bilingual AI researchers exemplify this shift. In advanced manufacturing, English enables a navigation of global supply chains, technical manuals, and AI-driven machinery. India's aspiration to become a manufacturing hub falters without this fluency; 82% of remote tech roles demand English, while workers lacking proficiency face 68%-85% reduced access to high-growth sectors.

A persistent myth suggests that China thrived without English. In reality, its pivot in the 1990s to advanced manufacturing necessitated sweeping English adoption. Today, 400 million Chinese learn English, aligning with initiatives such as Huawei's in-house language programmes. India cannot replicate China's 1970s low-cost model; modern manufacturing demands that workers who are fluent in both regional languages and English to operate cyber-physical systems and global interfaces.

In India, constitutional parity and reality

India's constitutional equality between Hindi and English has collapsed into a false dichotomy. The National Education Policy 2020's vague multilingualism allows non-Hindi States to prioritise English and mother tongues (for example, Kerala, Tamil Nadu), yielding higher STEM enrolment and economic mobility. Conversely, regions emphasising Hindi-first policies lag in educational outcomes. With 93% of global technical courses in English, State curricula that marginalise it perpetuate colonial-era divides, reserving fluency for the elite.

By 2050, India will account for 23% of the global workforce. Yet, without English proficiency, this demographic dividend risks becoming a disaster. The World Economic Forum identifies AI, cybersecurity, and green energy as future job engines – all English-dominated. Kerala's model, teaching Malayalam and English from Class one, proves that linguistic pride and pragmatism coexist. Conversely, States treating English as optional violate constitutional equality, restricting youth from national growth.

Asia's rise offers a stark lesson: nations that weaponise language politics stagnate; those that weaponise language skills dominate. India must treat English as constitutional infrastructure, not ideological collateral. This is not a contest between English and regional languages but between preparing workers for AI and quantum computing – fields where English is the global standard – or risking obsolescence. Proficiency in English is not just helpful, it is essential. Vietnam's now 22-year language project shows transformation is possible with resolve. For India, the countdown to 2047 begins now.

The gender budget — bigger allocations, little impact

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Without addressing the intersectional realities of caste, class, gender, and the digital divide, the gender budget will continue to fail India's women

The Union Budget 2025-26 has been hailed for its increased allocation towards women-centric schemes, with the total gender budget rising to ₹4.49 lakh crore, marking a 37.25% increase from the previous fiscal year's allocation of ₹3.27 lakh crore. The increased allocation is substantial even if one factors in an inflationary rate of approximately 3.61%.

Despite rising allocations, poor results

The amount allocated for the gender budget has increased consistently – ₹1,71,006.47 crore in 2022-23, ₹2,38,219.75 in 2023-24, ₹3,27,158.44 in 2024-25 and ₹4,49,028.68 in 2025-26. This signifies the government's clear intent to bridge gender disparities. But despite the increase in the expenditure, the economic benefits to women have not percolated in the same ratio. Specifically, tangible benefits to women, particularly from marginalised populations, including the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), have failed miserably. This is despite the government announcing many programmes for the marginalised. To illustrate, this year, a corpus of ₹300 crore has been allocated to the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) for the socio-economic development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and ₹75 crore for the Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, also aimed at tribal welfare.

Even though India has been drafting a gender budget for 20 years, it has failed to include evaluations from previous Budgets to inform a gender budget which incorporates the intersectionality of caste, class, and tribal identities. This has led to the failure of the schemes to transform the lives of marginalised women.

As Vikas Singh from Daang Vikas Sansthan, who works with widows of mine workers in Rajasthan, points out, "Schemes are very nice on paper, but digitization has created new barriers. Most women lack digital literacy, making accessing welfare schemes without middlemen difficult." The government's move to eliminate intermediaries through digitisation necessitates urgent investments in digital literacy programmes.

Outdated Census data, other gaps

Women from SC/ST communities face layered discrimination, making it vital to analyse how budgetary allocations address these intersections. In the Union Budget 2025-26, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs received an allocation of ₹14,925.81 crore – a 45.79% increase from the previous year's revised estimate of ₹10,237.33 crore. However, specific allocations under the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) are not detailed in the available sources.

These sub-plans are integral to the Budgets of various Ministries, with the aim of ensuring targeted development for SCs and STs. The combined allocations for SCSP and TSP across all Ministries are substantial, reflecting the commitment to welfare. But there is a lack of gender-disaggregated data within these plans, which makes it challenging to assess their actual impact on SC/ST women. The last Census in India was in 2011, making current data outdated. This gap raises serious questions about how government policies are tailored without updated statistics, affecting accountability mechanisms.

According to the "Dalit Adivasi Budget Analysis 2023-24" report by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), over 35% of the funds allocated under SCSP and TSP are underutilised due to bureaucratic red tape and lack of community involvement. Complicated paperwork, procedural barriers, low outreach, and an inadequate dissemination of information hinder women from availing themselves of welfare schemes. Though women do not understand the nitty-gritties due to the financial jargon of the Economic Survey, they wait every year for "schemes", "subsidies", and government support that can make their life easier.

Schemes often fail to consider regional, cultural and social diversities, especially in tribal areas where access to education and health care remains dismal. The literacy rate among tribal women is 49.4%, compared to the national female literacy rate of 64.63% (Census 2011).

Issues to tackle

According to Sandeep Patnaik, a researcher and journalist working on women's rights and panchayati raj issues, "Strengthening local institutions and ensuring better utilization of existing funds is as important as increasing allocations." The role of panchayati raj institutions is critical in ensuring the last-mile delivery of services, yet they often lack the autonomy and the resources to implement gender-sensitive policies effectively. Also, the government needs to create strict rules to prevent the rule of "sarpanch husbands", which has become one of the significant obstacles to women's empowerment and upliftment.

Gender budgets must be designed after an audit that accounts for intersectionality of caste, class, and tribal identities at the central and State levels. Second, the government must adopt community-led participatory methods that involve women, especially those from SC/ST backgrounds, in planning and monitoring schemes. Evidence from Kerala's Kudumbashree mission shows that community-led implementation significantly improves outreach and effectiveness. Establishing transparent monitoring systems to track fund utilisation and impact would be beneficial. The creation of a gender budget tracking portal could foster greater public accountability.

While the increased allocation for women in the Budget is in the right direction, real progress lies in its effective implementation. Without addressing the intersectional realities of caste, class, gender, and the digital divide, the gender budget will continue to fail women. For transformative change, policies must move beyond tokenism to ensure equity, accessibility, and accountability.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A marginalisation

There is a stark contrast in governance, media coverage and national concern regarding Manipur and the rest of India, and it is worth pondering over this. Had Manipur been located where Delhi is today, would its fate have been different? For months, Manipur has witnessed ethnic violence, displacement, and unrest. However, the urgency with which national issues are handled in Delhi stands in sharp contrast to the negligence often faced by States in the northeast. Unfortunately, the physical remoteness of Manipur translates into its marginalisation in the national discourse. This raises critical questions about the equity of governance and media prioritisation. Are some States more "Indian" than others? It is time we bridge this gap, in governance and in perception. Every region deserves equal attention, empathy, and action.

Md Sabir Hussain,
Ara, Bihar

Syed Abid Ali

As a school student, I have watched Syed Abid Ali at the Gagan Mahal playground playing for All Saints High School, Abids, Hyderabad. Though talented, he could not get an early enough chance to play for India as there was severe competition among Hyderabad players. As Sunil Gavaskar has said, "He was a thorough gentleman...." We will miss a great cricketer known for Hyderabadi 'Tameez'.

M.V. Nagavender Rao,
Hyderabad

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Is learning Hindi as a third language necessary?

Yogendra Yadav

Psephologist and founding national president of Swaraj India

T.M. Krishna

Carnatic musician and author

PARLEY

The National Education Policy, 2020, encourages students up to at least Class 5 to learn a regional language in addition to the local language or mother tongue and English. While the Central government asserts that the choice of the additional regional language is left to the States, the NEP's strong pitch for the three-language formula has led to fear, especially in Tamil Nadu, that there is an attempt being made to impose Hindi on non-Hindi speaking States. This week, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin dubbed the NEP a "Hindutva policy" aimed at promoting Hindi, rather than focusing on India's overall development. Is learning Hindi as a third language necessary? Yogendra Yadav and T.M. Krishna discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **K.V. Prasad**. Edited excerpts:

Should learning a third language be made compulsory?

Yogendra Yadav: Absolutely not. First, because the spirit of federalism and respect for diversity is foundational to the Union of India. So, nothing can be imposed on any State, least of all a language policy. If we have different views on language, they are resolved through consensus, not through imposition. I'm entirely with the DMK and the people of Tamil Nadu on the imposition issue.

T.M. Krishna: If I may ask, why learn three languages? To be clear, we are not talking about students learning other languages of their own accord, which is anyway happening. A government that selectively deletes chapters from history textbooks, stating that there is too much of an education burden on students, is not even willing to look at the fact that learning another language is definitely a burden on them. Also, children in primary and middle school don't have an imagination of time or the distant future. So asking them to learn a third language, in the name of future benefit, is basically an imposition. There is also the argument being made that learning more languages creates unity. This is a smokescreen. Forcing a language on someone is not unity.

YY: Once we disentangle the idea of teaching three languages from Central imposition and the compulsion of Hindi, we can discuss the issue dispassionately. The point about the burden of education is something that experts have handled. They have come to the conclusion that if you teach a third language, it only helps your primary and secondary language, so I believe that the three-language formula merits serious consideration on grounds of pedagogy and national unity. As for practicality, I know of schools which do follow this formula. They do not give you the option of all the 22 languages (recognised in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution), but they give you three or four options to choose from. These things can be worked out provided there is a political will and a capacity to teach anything at all.

A student at a government school in Tamil Nadu. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

If compulsory learning of an additional language will be a burden on students, will it not be equally burdensome on schools, since they will need qualified teachers and funds for this purpose?

TMK: More than 5,000 schools in Uttar Pradesh are managed by a single teacher. Bihar has a massive teacher shortage. So, even in terms of resources, this formula does not make sense. When resources are few, it makes more sense to look at the ways in which we can teach primary subjects better. And when the mother tongue is the mode of learning and communication in class, and there is English as well, I don't believe that adding another language is necessary.

Is it fair to make adoption of the three-language formula a pre-condition for the release of Central funds for schemes?

YY: Holding back grants is unconstitutional. This is part of a political assault on the autonomy of the Tamil Nadu government, led by the Governor himself. I understand why not just the DMK, but all parties and the people of Tamil Nadu feel slighted.

TMK: It is unconstitutional, unethical, and devoid of any basis. Some people say, let the people decide whether they want three languages or two. But people did not decide about the three-language policy; individuals in the Union government made this decision.

> Learning three languages, which are distinct from each other, is a good idea to nurture multilingualism that is inherent in our cultures. But this cannot be imposed on anyone. Students should learn a modern Indian language that is distinct from their mother tongue.
> YOGENDRA YADAV

Why is there so much resistance to an educational policy that stresses on the need to learn an additional language?

YY: My suspicion is that the resistance does not come from pedagogical concerns. It emanates from disquiet with double standards. Frankly, the formula was sabotaged by north India. The expectation was that all the southern and eastern States would learn Hindi, while the Hindi speakers found a shortcut for themselves – they used Sanskrit as a shield so that they would not have to learn a new language. So, in effect, the policy meant that everyone would be forced to learn the mother tongue of Hindi speakers, but they would not have to learn anyone else's mother tongue. That legitimate unease has clouded the debate on multilingualism in our country.

TMK: Multilingualism is not just a political problem; it's pedagogic too. The pedagogical methods have changed. At the primary and middle-school level, activity-based learning and experiential learning should be the focus. There are already two languages at play; that itself is multilingualism. I do not view multilingualism in terms of language alone; it is a way of making people be diverse in feeling and in being. People learn languages when they forge relationships, for instance. We can't forget that cultural character and emotional connections make people learn a language.

Monolingualism is predominant in many Hindi-speaking States, irrespective of the three-language formula.

YY: The problem is the false sense of pride that many people in north India have developed, especially in Hindi-speaking areas, that somehow Hindi is a more privileged language than any other language. Many people in the north use the term 'national language', which is nowhere mentioned in the Constitution. This is what irks the non-Hindi speaker. The Hindi that we know today is a recent and young language, unlike Tamil or Kannada, which are some of the oldest and richest languages in the world.

TMK: It is difficult to get data on this, but I would like to know how many schools in north India that profess to teach three languages really do that. Is the policy actually being followed?

YY: As I said, in most north Indian States, Hindi is taught along with English and Sanskrit. Sanskrit has become a way to bypass the requirement of the third language. So, technically, yes, it is followed.

TMK: Exactly my point. There is an important cultural point that needs to be understood about the Tamil people and the Tamil language. Tamil as a language is very distinct from every other Sanskrit-based or Sanskrit-derived language. Fundamentally, it is a very difficult task for a Tamil speaker to even learn Hindi or its cousin languages. In Tamil Nadu, people have learned other languages on their own. The dominant positioning of Sanskrit in the NEP, especially for a Tamil speaker, is intimidating especially when the language is so distinct and different grammatically and structurally.

YY: To position Sanskrit as the sole carrier of our cultural heritage is a serious mistake. Besides, Sanskrit is not being taught to inculcate classical learning, but mainly to sabotage the three-language formula. In effect, Hindi speakers are not learning a new language or script.

What do you propose is the way forward to end the current stand-off?

YY: Learning three languages, which are distinct from each other, is a good idea to nurture multilingualism that is inherent in our cultures. But this cannot be imposed on anyone. Students should learn a modern Indian language that is distinct from their mother tongue. In the north, it would be "preferably a south Indian language" – exactly what the original formula had mandated and was never implemented.

TMK: The distinctness is exactly why I feel there should be only two languages. English is already so distinct from whatever language you speak, be it Hindi or Tamil. Therefore, adding another language is not going to help.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

The desire for a pliable media cuts across the political spectrum

When this demand is not met, journalists immediately come in the firing line

S. Anandan

In politics, the official version most often comes apart at the seams quickly. And when it unravels, often the first response of political parties is to blame the media for 'misreporting', accuse it of bias and in some cases, unleash cyber warriors on the reporters who covered the story.

This is not to let the media off the hook for its flaws, but something as hydra-headed as the media often gets collectively branded as one entity and flogged, whether or not someone was at fault. Every bit of moral indignation on Malayalam social media these days is a pretext for political leaders and their cyber warriors to target journalists. "Imagine if one of our leaders had said this? These journos – described using a pejorative term – would have pounced on him" has become a familiar refrain.

Politicians, political parties, and their acolytes have a love-hate relationship with the news media. But some of those who chastise the news media for its 'value erosion' and 'waning influence' also want it to be pliable. This desire cuts across the political spectrum. When it is not met, journalists are in the firing line.

A recent discussion in Kerala about who the Chief Minister would be if the Congress-led UDF came to power following the Assembly elections in 2026 was triggered and fostered by some senior Congress leaders whose statements added grist to the rumour mills. But when this imagined scenario led to a full-blown controversy within the alliance, with some minor alliance partners expressing their discontent, all the blame was put on the media. Leaders were barred from unofficial briefings to the media, a move that impractical and self-defeating.

Union Minister of State and BJP leader Suresh Gopi seems to have realised that even bad press is beneficial so long as there is a polarised social media. An actor first and foremost, he was irked last August when he was asked about the K. Hema Committee Report on the working condition of women in the Malayalam film industry. He lodged police complaints against mediapersons for blocking his way.

Last November, the BJP's loss in the Palakkad byelection led to rumours about a leadership change in the party in the State. Naturally, there was a slew of news stories. When the rift within the party was out in the open, the party's State chief vented his anger on the media and warned journalists of consequences. While asking critical questions with civility is the media's fundamental job, often, responses to legitimate queries have varied from mild intimidation to in-your-face intimidation to open threats on social media. This is what makes political reporting a tough terrain to navigate.

The CPI(M), the lead party in the governing LDF in Kerala, has never tried to conceal its uneasy relationship with the media. The party is combative even during routine interactions. The CPI(M)'s State conference in Kollam recently epitomised the party's distrust of the media. As always, it featured a media centre in a separate enclosure outside the venue. But journalists with passes to cover the event were unwelcome at the media centre except during press meets and special interactions with leaders. If reporters wanted to key in their story or catch a breath, they had to go out and take refuge under a few trees lining the parking ground nearby for the remainder of the scorching day. While this was not a major inconvenience, it still pointed to the larger issue of 'tokenism', championed by most political parties.

Every political formation in India seems concerned about the state of the media, but hardly anyone takes concrete steps to facilitate journalism. This could be why the tribe of probing political journalists is dwindling. Nevertheless, journalists must realise that tough times often spawn quality journalism.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK | The strength of women

Women do deadlifts as part of an International Women's Day event in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

Shot on OnePlus #FramesofIndia

FROM THE ARCHIVES The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 14, 1975

Tamil Nadu opposed to "bare-foot" doctors plan

Madras, March 13: The Tamil Nadu Government was totally opposed to the Centre's scheme of appointing "bare-foot" doctors" to meet the medical needs of the rural masses, Mr. K. Anbazhagan, Health Minister, told the State Assembly to-day.

Instead, Tamil Nadu had suggested the setting up of an additional Primary Health Centre in every Panchayat Union having over a lakh of people but the Centre rejected it, he said. (The "bare-foot doctors" are like quacks who do not receive any scientific training. They will be taught how to administer certain drugs for common ailments).

Replying to the three-hour discussion on the demands for grants for medical, public health and allied subjects, the Minister said the Primary Health Centres, which were rendering useful service, were not able to cope with the large number of patients.

The Government, therefore, proposed to increase the number of doctors at each centre from two to three. This would enable the medical officers to visit the rural areas more frequently.

The third medical officer would be appointed in 100 PHCs to start with.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 14, 1925

Possibility of building a solid causeway

In a recent issue of "The Ceylon Times" F.J. Waring's scheme for linking Ceylon with India by rail, which was for the construction of the Adam's Bridge formation of 10 miles of embankments, including the existing sand banks, and the provision of ten miles of openings at all places where the depth of water exceeded three feet was described.

Mr. J.T. Lewis proposed an embankment of sand, pitched with coral to prevent the sand from being blown away.

Madras HC fixes a cap on tourist vehicles to the Nilgiris, Kodaikanal

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The cap does not apply to vehicles of local residents and those transporting essential commodities. SATHYAMOORTHY M

The Madras High Court on Thursday fixed a cap on vehicles entering the Nilgiris during the summer season between April and June this year, limiting the number to 6,000 tourist vehicles a day during weekdays and 8,000 vehicles during weekends. The cap for Kodaikanal is 4,000 vehicles a day during weekdays and 6,000 during weekends.

A special Division Bench of Justices N. Sathish Kumar and D. Bharatha Chakravarthy made it clear the cap would not apply to the tourists who visit the hill stations using public transport such as government buses and trains, and to the vehicles of local residents and those transporting essential commodities.

The orders were passed after taking note that only 23,000 tourists could be accommodated in a day (at the 1,035 commercial accommodations with 5,620 rooms, apart from 575 licensed homestays) in the Nilgiris and only a much smaller number of tourists could be accommodated in Kodaikanal.

The Bench also ordered that the tourists visiting the hill stations in e-vehicles should be given preference in issuance of e-pass and directed the local bodies concerned to take steps for establishment of enough number of electric charging points for the benefit of e-vehicle users.

The judges requested Advocate General P.S. Raman to persuade the State government to deploy mini e-buses with transparent bodies to encourage the tourists to park their private motor vehicles on the foothills and undertake the tour to the hill stations in those buses.

The Bench said, ideally, it should become a norm in the future in order to promote quality tourism. They expressed concern over the ghat roads being flooded with motor vehicles, especially during tourist season, causing harm to the environment and hardship to local residents.

CM taking a Zia-ul-Haq approach on Holi, says PDP

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday accused Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of emulating former Pakistan dictator Zia-ul-Haq in taking measures for Holi celebration.

"Holi used to be celebrated happily with both Hindus and Muslims coming together. This time, the atmosphere has been vitiated, especially by the Uttar Pradesh CM. His approach is like that of Zia-ul-Haq, who created a similar communal atmosphere in Pakistan once. That country is yet to overcome that. Similar poison is fed here," she said.

Urging the government to allow Hindus to celebrate Holi on Friday and allow Muslims to go to Friday prayers, she said: "The kind of treatment that is being meted out to Muslims (on Holi) is very wrong. This country used to be of Ganga-Jamuni *tehzeeb* (culture), and Hindus and Muslims lived together happily. May the Almighty give wisdom not to pit Hindus and Muslims against each other."

Leave India if you oppose Holi colours: U.P. Minister

Muslim scholars, Opposition leaders accuses Sanjay Nishad of creating division and spreading hatred; they argue that such comment goes against the basic ethos of India's plural society

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Strict monitoring: Police personnel check a motorcyclist on the eve of Holi in Aligarh on Thursday. PTI

Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Minister and NISHAD party president Sanjay Nishad on Thursday said that those who had a problem with Holi colours should leave the country.

"People embrace each other during Friday prayers and they do the same while celebrating Holi. These festivals signify togetherness, yet some politicians don't want this unity. A particular group is being misled by poisoning their minds, and they, too, are citizens of this country. If they have issues with colours, they shouldn't just stay indoors, they should leave the country," Mr. Nishad, State Fisheries Minister, said at a Holi Milan event in Gorakhpur.

Many Muslim scholars reacted sharply to the statement, with the national president of the All India Muslim Jamaat, Maulana Shahabuddin Rizvi, accusing the Minister of creating division in society, spreading hatred, going against his oath and inciting people.

"No one, not even a Minister, has the right to make comments that spread hatred or create division in society. When he took the oath, he did not swear that those who avoid colours should leave the country. Instead, he vowed to ensure justice for all and work without discrimination," he said.

Opposition leaders criticised the Minister, accusing the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP of indulging in competition about who could spread more hatred in society through statements. "Among NDA leaders, a competition is ongoing to see who can spread more hatred in society and create division. Such a comment goes against the basic ethos of our plural society. People in our country lived side by side and celebrated Holi and Id together in harmony for ages; it is not the first time that these festivals are being celebrated," Shahnawaz Alam, secretary of the Congress, said.

Ahead of Holi, Uttar Pradesh Police remain on high alert

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Police remain on high alert on Thursday, on the eve of the festival of Holi, coinciding with the Jumma congregation of Ramzan, with a flag march being conducted along with additional deployment of personnel in many districts.

In at least five sensitive districts, Sambhal, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Bijnor, and Aligarh, some mosques have been covered with tarpaulin for protection from colour. In Shahjahanpur, at least two dozen mosques have been covered with tarpaulin and the police conducted a flag march in sensitive areas with over 500 police personnel deployed from other districts.

In Bareilly, senior district police officials including Senior Superintendent of Police, District Megistrate led the flag march in localities falling in the Kotwali, Qila and Baradari police station limits.

In Lucknow, police personnel were engaged in patrolling, and drone cameras were put in place to maintain law and order and keep a check on antisocial elements.

British woman raped in Delhi by social media friend, molested by hotel staffer

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

Resident of east Delhi arrested as main accused; police teams checking CCTV footage of the hotel

A British woman was allegedly raped at a hotel in southwest Delhi, the police said on Thursday. The main accused has been arrested.

The woman has also made a complaint of molestation in the hotel lift by a member of the housekeeping staff. A separate case has been registered and the staff member arrested.

The Delhi Police have informed the British High Commission of the case. A Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) spokesperson said, "We are supporting a British woman in India and are in touch with the local authorities." The woman had come to India about 45 days ago. She had visited Maharashtra before travelling to Goa. On Tuesday, she was in Delhi reportedly to meet Kailash, 24, who had befriended her on Instagram recently, a senior official said.

Call from hospital

Officials said they received a police control room call from a hospital between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. on Wednesday.

A team from the local police station was dispatched to the hospital, where the woman gave them the details. She said she had been first molested by a housekeeping staff member. Later, she met Kailash who allegedly raped her in a hotel room.

Deputy Commission of Police (South West) Surendra Chaudhary clarified that two separate cases have been registered.

The police said the woman had booked a room in the hotel in Mahipalpur. When Kailash came to meet her, they had alcohol and then he had raped her, she said. The accused, a resident of east Delhi, had recorded his entry in the hotel register and the police used the details to nab him.

Police teams are checking CCTV footage of the hotel and a probe is on.

Over ₹2,500-crore financial liabilities to be transferred to Ladakh, says J&K CM Omar

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary during the Budget session on Thursday. ANI

Financial liabilities amounting to ₹2,504.46 crore are to be transferred to the Union Territory of Ladakh and the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the administration of Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Thursday.

Mr. Abdullah told the Legislative Assembly that a committee had been constituted to ensure the transparent distribution of assets, liabilities and Budget between the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh following the reorganisation.

Responding to a query from member Qaysar Jamshaid Lone, the Chief Minister stated that the process is being carried out in accordance with Notification SO-339 of GAD, dated October 30, 2020.

"The apportionment was to be conducted in a manner to ensure a fair transfer of assets, liabilities and Budget between the two U.T.s. After completion of the process, an official gazette notification was issued on October 31, 2020," he said.

Mr. Abdullah, who also holds the portfolio of Finance, informed that most of the committee's recommendations have already been implemented.

Kathua killings probe does not point to terror angle: official

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Official says that around 80 foreign terrorists are suspected to be active in Jammu region.

Days after Union Minister Jitendra Singh said that three persons, including a 15-year-old boy, whose bodies were found in Kathua's Billawar area were killed by "terrorists", a senior Jammu and Kashmir government official said the circumstances and the medical reports have so far ruled out a terror angle. The police said they had died after a fall from a height.

Another government official said nearly 150 terrorists are suspected to be present in J&K, of which 10-15 are locals, while the remaining are foreigners. The official added that nearly 80 foreign terrorists are suspected to be active in the Jammu region.

Since 2021, there have been concerted attempts to revive militancy in the Jammu region, Chenab Valley comprising Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Kathua, Udhampur and Reasi districts and the south of the Pir Panjal comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts. While terror incidents have been common in Kashmir Valley, militant activity revived in the Jammu belt that has remained free of such incidents in the past two decades.

The official said the bodies of the three persons – Varun Singh (15), Yogesh Singh (32) and Darshan Singh (40) – bore no torture marks and there was no sign of strangulation or a bullet wound.

The victims had been missing from the Lohai Malhar area since March 5. The bodies were spotted near a waterfall with the help of drones and ground patrolling.

On March 9, Mr. Singh posted on X: "The brutal killing of 3 youth by terrorists in Bani area of district #Kathua is extremely sad as well as a matter of great concern. There appears to be a deep conspiracy behind spoiling the atmosphere in this peaceful area."

'Psychological warfare'

The official said: "If a terror group killed them, it would have claimed responsibility, Pakistani groups leave behind a message. The victim's phone has been found. The photo of the bodies circulated on social media by some Pakistani handles, claiming to be terrorist outfits, appears to be psychological warfare. The particular photo in circulation was clicked by the police when they found the bodies to share with the family members for identification and for investigation purposes."

Uttarakhand govt. seals 52 madrasas in two weeks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

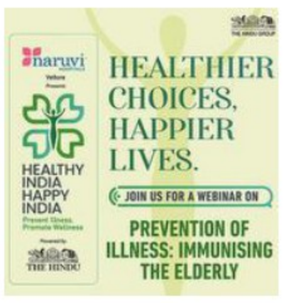
The Uttarakhand government has sealed 52 madrasas in the State in a span of two weeks. Muslim organisations have criticised the crackdown.

According to sources, some 42 madrasas have been sealed in Dehradun and 10 in Khatima in Udham Singh Nagar district since March 1. Government officials said almost all of them were found to have illegal and unauthorised construction.

Some of the institutions were also not registered, they said, adding that the identification drive began in January on the orders of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who has on several occasions stated the State government's resolve to take action against illegal construction.

Naruvi Hospitals, *The Hindu* to present webinar on adult immunisation on March 16

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI


naruvi
HEALTHY INDIA HAPPY INDIA
HEALTHIER CHOICES, HAPPIER LIVES.
JOIN US FOR A WEBINAR ON
PREVENTION OF ILLNESS: IMMUNISING THE ELDERLY

Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in association with *The Hindu*, will present a webinar titled "Prevention of illness: immunising the elderly" at 11.30 a.m. on Sunday as part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" series.

The 15-part series is based on the theme of preventing illness to promote wellness.

There is a lack of a national schedule for adult and elderly immunisation in India. The webinar will emphasise the need for timely vaccinations and encourage clinicians to proactively administer vaccines to protect adults from preventable diseases.

This is the sixth webinar in the series, featuring a distinguished panel of doctors. Kurien Thomas, senior consultant and clinical epidemiologist, Naruvi Hospitals, will discuss pneumococcal, Hib and hepatitis vaccines.

Dilip Mathai, senior consultant in infectious diseases, Naruvi Hospitals, will offer his perspectives on adult vaccination, types of vaccines and the guidelines for adult immunisation.

Soumendra Nath Haldar, Assistant Professor, Department of Infectious Diseases and Advanced Microbiology, School of Tropical Medicine, Kolkata, will share insights on "Vaccine clinic: food and waterborne diseases (typhoid, cholera, rotavirus, meningococcal) and technical aspects related to cost, storage, and administration".

Vasant C. Nagvekar, infectious diseases specialist, H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital and Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai, will discuss the importance of vaccines for annual influenza (seasonal), shingles, varicella zoster (chickenpox), coronavirus, and H5N1.

The session will be moderated by Athira Elssa Johnson, senior reporter, *The Hindu*. To register, visit newsth.live/HIHIUIE or scan the QR code.

Auction of licences to explore critical minerals launched

Press Trust of India
PANAJI

Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Thursday launched the country's first-ever auction of exploration licences (ELs) for 13 exploration blocks for critical minerals.

Mr. Reddy launched the ELs in the presence of Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant in Dona Paula near here, a major reform aimed to unlock India's untapped critical and deep-seated mineral resources.

The licences are for the exploration blocks for minerals such as REE (rare earth elements), zinc, diamond, copper, PGE (platinum group minerals) and others.

Mr. Reddy said that in the last 10 years, India's mining sector has achieved many milestones and emerged as one of the fastest and most dynamic sectors. "We are laying the foundation for a new era in mineral exploration," he said.

"We have established ourselves as a serious player in the global mineral landscape, it has also opened floodgates of opportunities for the private sector," he said. Mr. Reddy added even greater milestones will be achieved in the coming years and it will pave the way for the rise of India as a global leader.

The exploration access would be granted exclusively, which would empower private companies to explore up to 1,000 square metres per licence, Mr. Reddy said. This new framework will encourage transparency, efficiency, innovation, ensuring that only the most promising areas remain for a detailed exploration, he said.

APPEAL

Ms.D.M.Suma Rao, in Patient No. AA965596, 24 years old daughter of S.R. Mohan Rao admitted Bangalore Baptist Hospital is a diagnosed case of Acute Myeloid Leukemia - Refractory. She is planned for Salvage Chemotherapy followed by Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplant. The estimated cost is approximately **Rs. 25,00,000/-.**
Kindly send donation however small by Cheque/D.D/M.O favouring **Save Poor Lives** A/c D.M.Suma Rao. **Our Account Details:** S/B Account No. 20000913487. State Bank of India, R.A. Puram, and IFSC CODE: SBIN0001855, you can donate through Google Pay No. **9884607377**, UPI Id: **savepoorlives@oksbi.** All donations are exempted under 80G of I.T. ACT.
SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, Flat No. A1, Ceebros Garden, Ground Floor, Old No. 76 Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai - 600 028. Contact No. **044 42044165 & 044 35691848,** Mobile: **9884607377,** Email: **savepoorlives@gmail.com.** Our website: **www.savepoorlives.com**

T.N. opts for Tamil letter 'ரூ' instead of '₹' in Budget logo

It was used only to 'avoid using Devanagari', says Vice-Chairman of State Planning Commission; T.N. BJP chief slams move, says DMK is taking meaningless decisions to hide its incompetence

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Stepping up the campaign to promote Tamil, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday released a promotional logo for the Tamil Nadu Budget for 2025-26, replacing the Indian currency symbol, ₹, used in the previous financial year's Budget with the Tamil letter 'Roo' ('ரூ') to denote '*Roobai*' (the Tamil word for the currency).

The Budget will be presented on Friday.

The logo, shared on the official X page of the Chief Minister, carried the slogan *Ellarkum Ellam* (everything for everyone) conveying the idea of inclusiveness. The promotional video produced by the Information and Public Relations Department has included the Sangam period *Purananooru* verse in praise of the Chera King Cheraman Palai Paadiiya Perumkadungo.

The promotional logo for the T.N. Budget without the ₹ symbol released by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Official sources said the Tamil Nadu government, in its Budget document, was using the Tamil letter 'ரூ' and the English word rupees and had not opted for the symbol ₹ in the text.

"The Chief Minister has used Tamil, one of the 15 languages in the Indian currency. It is not against the Constitution," an official source said.

BJP State president K. Annamalai criticised the DMK government for replacing the rupee symbol ₹, which is a blend of the Devanagari 'Ra' for rupiah and the Roman 'R' for rupees in English. In an X post, he said, "The DMK government's State Budget for 2025-26 replaces the rupee symbol designed by a Tamilian, which was adopted by the whole of Bharat and incorporated into our currency. Thiru Udaya Kumar, who designed the symbol, is the son of a former DMK MLA?" The symbol ₹ was designed by D. Udaya Kumar, who won a national contest to design a symbol for the rupee in 2010. He is the son of former DMK MLA N. Dharmalingam, who won from Rishivandiyam in the 1971 election.

At a press conference, J. Jeyaranjan, Executive Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission, claimed the Tamil letter 'ரூ' (roo) was used only to "avoid using Devanagari".

Reacting to Mr. Jeyaranjan's comments, Mr. Annamalai said: "Mere advertisements and meaningless decisions to hide incompetence: summary of the last four years of the DMK."

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee chief K. Selvaperunthagai, in a post on X, said those with hostility towards Tamil Nadu would not like the replacement of the Indian currency symbol.

Move reveals a dangerous mindset, says Nirmala

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said removing the Indian currency symbol '₹' from "Tamil Nadu Budget 2025-26 documents" was more than mere symbolism.

She said it signalled a dangerous mindset that "weakens Indian unity and promotes secessionist sentiments under the pretence of regional pride. A completely avoidable example of language and regional chauvinism."

"At a time when India is pushing for cross-border payments using UPI, should we really be undermining our own national currency symbol?" Ms. Sitharaman asked in a post of social media platform X.

If the DMK had a problem with '₹', why didn't it protest back in 2010 when it was officially adopted under the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government, she asked.

Congress raises concern over tie-up of Airtel and Jio with Musk's Starlink

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Raising national security concerns about Airtel and Jio's new partnership with Elon Musk's Starlink, the Congress on Thursday alleged that these agreements had been orchestrated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "buy goodwill" with U.S. President Donald Trump.

The Opposition party said that red flags were raised by the coincidence of the country's two leading telecommunication companies announcing their partnerships with the satellite-based Internet service provider within 12 hours of each other, overcoming their previous objections to Starlink's entry.

"It is abundantly clear that these partnerships have been orchestrated by none other than the Prime Minister himself to buy goodwill with President Trump through Starlink's owner Mr. Elon Musk," Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X. The most important question that needs to be pondered is the implications this deal will have on national security, he said.

Who will have the power to switch connectivity on or off when national security demands it? Will it be Starlink or its Indian partners?
JAIRAM RAMESH
Congress leader

"Who will have the power to switch connectivity on or off when national security demands it? Will it be Starlink or its Indian partners? Will other satellite-based connectivity providers also be permitted and on what basis," Mr. Ramesh asked.

"And, of course, the much larger question of Tesla manufacturing in India remains. Is there some commitment to it now that Starlink's entry into India has been facilitated?"

Mr. Musk is the owner of Starlink and its aerospace parent SpaceX, as well as electric vehicle maker Tesla and social media platform X.

He has emerged as a key adviser to Mr. Trump, having contributed millions to his campaign and now leading the Trump administration's new Department of Government Efficiency.

Question on pacts with armed groups 'removed': MP

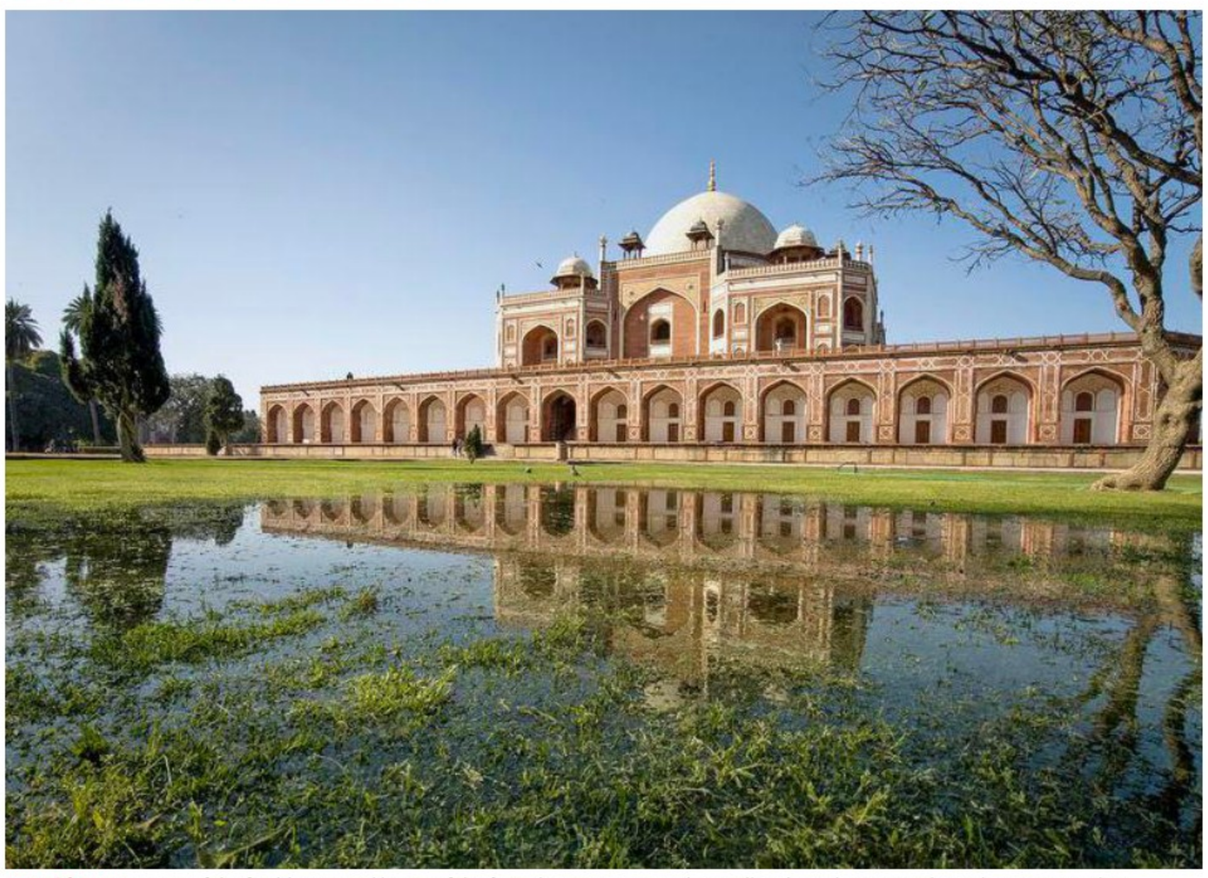
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress MP A. Bimol Akoijam has said that a question he had sent in for Lok Sabha on the Centre's pacts with insurgent and armed groups in Northeastern States had been "removed" from the list of Starred Questions for March 11. He said this was a "serious infringement" on his rights as an MP.

Mr. Akoijam posted about this on X late on Wednesday night, saying he had met with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju over this "unusual episode".

He said that Mr. Birla assured him that his office would "do the necessary next week".

Sentinel of the seasons


Long history: A view of the freshly watered lawns of the famed Humayun's Tomb in Delhi. The India Meteorological Department has announced an early arrival of summer after the warmest February in 125 years. R.V. MOORTHY

Raise gratuity ceiling for private sector workers: CITU

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has written to Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya demanding an amendment to the Payment of Gratuity Act to enhance the maximum gratuity ceiling limit from the present ₹20 lakh to ₹25 lakh.

The CITU has reasoned that the private sector workers should also get the recent amendments to the Central Civil Services (Pension) rules increasing the gratuity ceiling of Union government employees to ₹25 lakh. CITU general secretary Tapan Sen said the Payment of Gratuity Act of 1972 was an important social security law for the wage earning population.

House panel flags gaps in implementation of rural housing scheme

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The scheme relies on 14-year-old data from the Socio-Economic Caste Census to find beneficiaries, it says

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development has accused the government of failing to identify "genuine beneficiaries" for its flagship rural housing scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G).

The scheme relies on 14-year-old data from the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 to find beneficiaries.

In its report tabled on Wednesday, the panel headed by Congress MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka also criticised the government for not increasing the financial aid given under the scheme, which aims to provide "housing for all".

The Centre provides assistance of ₹1.2 lakh per unit in the plains and ₹1.3 lakh per unit in the northeastern States, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Though the government last year extended the scheme by five years, the assistance has not been increased.

In view of the rise in "construction costs" and "inflationary pressures", the committee recommended that the per-unit cost of houses under PMAY-G be increased to ₹4 lakh to ensure that beneficiaries receive quality housing that meets the minimum standards of safety and durability.

The panel pointed out that the eligibility criteria for PMAY-G were determined based on housing deprivation parameters from the SECC. "However, considerable time has passed since the base year, and it has been widely observed that many eligible beneficiaries have become ineligible while a whole lot of eligible beneficiaries have surfaced and are waiting to avail the benefits," the panel said in its report.

The committee has urged the Department of Rural Development to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing list of eligible beneficiaries at the earliest to ensure that newly emerging needy households, who were not covered under the SECC 2011 Census, are duly included in the scheme.

The committee also recommended that the eligibility criteria be expanded to include households with semi-permanent structures.

The panel further pointed out that the extension of the scheme, as advertised by the government, in reality largely only handles the backlog of the original programme.

"The committee strongly recommends that the total number of houses planned under the extended phase of PMAY-G be increased to at least 3.46 crore, accounting for the backlog of 1.46 crore houses and an additional 2 crore houses to ensure fresh allocations beyond the existing backlog," it said.

Finalise norms before announcing schemes in Budgets: report

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary Standing Committee has advised the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to hold consultations with stakeholders, and prepare and finalise the documents and guidelines to schemes prior to announcing them in Budgets.

"This would avoid allocation and parking of funds for such schemes wherein approvals would spill to subsequent financial years," the report on Demand for Grants of the Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs said.

The parliamentary committee made the recommendation with respect to two schemes announced in this year's Budget – 'Urban Challenge Fund' and 'Scheme for Industrial Housing' with allocations of ₹10,000 crore and ₹2,500 crore, respectively.

It also referred back to two earlier schemes announced by the Ministry – a public bus transport scheme that was announced in the 2021-22 Budget and approved by the Centre in August 2023 as PM-eBus Sewa Scheme.

> This will avoid allocation and parking of funds for such schemes wherein approvals will spill to subsequent financial years
> **HOUSE PANEL REPORT**

The other scheme is the National Urban Digital Mission, which was announced as a new scheme in the July 2024 Budget with an allocation of ₹1,150 crore for the financial year 2024-25.

Not utilised

While the funds under the PM-eBus Sewa Scheme were for the first time actually spent during the financial year 2024-25, the National Urban Digital Mission has not yet received Cabinet approval.

"The funds allocated thus remained unutilised," the report tabled in Parliament on Wednesday said.

Akali Dal to take part in meeting on delimitation

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Amid an attempt by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to join forces against the upcoming delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Saturday said that it would attend the meeting slated for March 22 in Chennai for developing a collective strategy on the issue.

"Punjab is a State which has supported the nation on population control, and hence we are worried that if population is the only criterion for delimitation then it's not sensible. States like ours should not be penalised for our efforts towards the nation. Northern States are likely to suffer equally as southern States," senior SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema told *The Hindu*.

"We have confirmed our participation. The party's working president Balwinder Bhunder and I would attend the meeting where deliberations would be held on issues surrounding delimitation and federalism," Mr. Cheema said.

SC says each vote has its own value and recount must not compromise ballot secrecy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Secrecy of ballot cannot be tinkered with by ordering recount of votes polled as a "matter of course", the Supreme Court has confirmed in a judgment.

"Each vote has its own value irrespective of its effect on the final outcome of the election. Its sanctity has to be protected," a Bench headed by Sanjay Karol observed in a recent judgment.

It was hearing an appeal concerning the election to the position of 'gram pradhan' for Chaka village in Uttar Pradesh in 2021. The appellant argued that there was an inconsistency in the number of votes cast. The Presiding Officer had stated that a total of 1,194 votes were cast on polling day, but the final tally showed 1,213 votes. The Supreme Court noted that the winner had won the election by 37 votes, and a dispute over 19 votes would not impact the poll results.

However, Justice Karol said the court's concern "lies away from who is in power and instead is in how one got to power".

Poll issues: The top court says secrecy of ballot has always been considered sacrosanct in a democratic process. PTI

The village panchayat election in 2021 was a four-cornered affair. Three of the candidates had raised doubts about the propriety of the election and sought, in affidavit, a recount of the votes. Besides, the police were used to remove the appellant from the vicinity of the polling area. Moreover, the records of the Presiding Officer had mysteriously disappeared.

Ordering a recount, the Supreme Court, referring to judicial precedents, reiterated that such an order must be given only if two conditions were fulfilled. One, if the petition for setting aside an election has material supporting facts. Two, if the court concerned is *prima facie* satisfied that a recount was necessary to do complete justice.

Cryptic applications claiming recount cannot be a trigger for taking this exceptional step at the risk of compromising the secrecy of the ballot. "Secrecy of ballot has always been considered sacrosanct in a democratic process of election and it cannot be disturbed lightly by bare allegations of illegality or irregularity in counting," the Bench quoted from an earlier judgment.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Scope of Work	Due date
242513 007062	Procurement of Root Trainer for 50 CC 60 Cavities (Hiko Tray).	29.03.2025
242513 007182	Laying of concrete flooring for formation of yard for storage of imported wood chips near west side of DIP waste paper godown at TNPL Unit - I.	24.03.2025
242523 004278	Poly Coating of Board on Job Work basis for various GSM's for TNPL Unit-II at Mondipatti for a period of One Year on per MT basis	25.03.2025
Email	242513007062 - purchase.wood@tnpl.co.in 242513007182 - pmd.civil@tnpl.co.in 242523004278 - purchaseimp.u2@tnpl.co.in	

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website only. Detailed requirements, Period, Terms & conditions, Tender fee, EMD, etc., are available in tender document at our website: www.tnpl.com / www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app.
DIPR/1016/Tender/2025 TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper

INBRIEF

Bombay HC dismisses case against singer Kailash Kher

The Bombay High Court has dismissed a criminal complaint against singer Kailash Kher for allegedly hurting religious sentiments over a song based on the Hindu deity Shiva, titled *Babam Bam* from the album *Kailasa Jhoomo re*. Quoting A.G. Noorani, a famous author, historian and political analyst, a Division Bench of Justices Bharati Dangre and Shyam C. Chandak observed, "Intolerance of dissent from the orthodoxy of the day has been the bane of Indian society for centuries. But it is precisely in the ready acceptance of the right to dissent as distinct from its mere tolerance that a free society distinguishes itself."

CBSE students missing March 15 exam to get another chance

The Central Board of Secondary Education on Thursday said Class 12 students who are unable to appear for the "Hindi Core (302)/Hindi Elective (002)" exams scheduled for March 15 due to Holi will get another chance to write the exams. "While exam will be held on March 15, those students who find it difficult to appear in the same may decide not to appear on that day. Such students would be given an opportunity to appear along with those students for whom special exam is conducted as per Board policy for students participating in national or international sports events," Sanyam Bhardwaj, Controller of Examinations, CBSE, said.

Pollution in Byrnihat comes from Assam: Meghalaya CM

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma suggested the Meghalaya part of Byrnihat could be getting a bad name because of industrial units in Assam. On Thursday, he told the State Assembly that the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board found Byrnihat's air quality to be satisfactory compared to "poor to very poor" recorded by an ambient air quality monitoring station installed in the Central Academy for State Forest Service across the inter-State boundary in Assam. "This indicates that the major sources of air pollution may be attributed to industrial and other activities on the Assam side," the Chief Minister said.

Youth arrested for running over 4 people in Dehradun

The Dehradun Police on Thursday arrested a 22-year-old man who was allegedly driving a luxury car that ran over four labourers in the Uttarakhand capital on Wednesday night. Senior Superintendent of Police Ajai Singh said the accused told the police that he and his 12-year-old nephew had gone for a drive towards Rajpur in his brother-in-law's car when it collided with a scooter coming from the opposite direction, went out of control, and hit the four persons. The car, with a Chandigarh number plate, was moving at a high speed when it hit the four people walking on the side of the road, the police said.

ISRO undocks SpaDex satellites in first attempt

Satellites are orbiting independently and their health is normal, says space agency; on January 16, ISRO successfully executed satellites' docking, making India the fourth country to achieve the feat

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Mission accomplished: On-board images of SpaDex undocking. ISRO

Nearly two months after the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) carried out the docking of the two satellites which are part of the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission, the space agency on Thursday accomplished their undocking.

The space agency said that it had accomplished the feat in its very first attempt. The undocking operation was executed at 9.20 a.m.

"The undocking of the satellites took place in a 460 km circular orbit with 45-degree inclination. The satellites are now orbiting independently and their health is normal," the agency said.

"With this, ISRO has now successfully demonstrated all the capabilities required for rendezvous, docking and undocking operations in a circular orbit."

It said that the in-orbit performance of the docked satellites was extensively analysed and an immediate opportunity was found to be feasible from March 10 to 25.

"All operations were monitored through ground stations located in Bengaluru, Lucknow and Mauritius. Having accomplished this major milestone of undocking, further experiments with satellites are planned for the coming days," the ISRO said.

It further said that exhaustive ground simulations and analysis were the cornerstones of achieving the undocking in the first attempt itself. "Various tests replicating on-orbit conditions were meticulously planned and carried out in preparation for the earliest opportunity for undocking operations," it said.

On January 16, the ISRO successfully executed the SpaDeX docking experiment, making India the fourth country after the U.S., Russia and China to achieve this historic feat.

Having accomplished the undocking, more experiments are planned for coming days, says ISRO

The two satellites SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target), which were launched by the PSLV C60 on December 30, were successfully docked on January 16.

Following this historic feat, the space agency had said that the undocking would be carried out in the coming days.

The SpaDeX mission is an important project by the ISRO. It is designed to develop and demonstrate the technology needed for spacecraft rendezvous, docking and undocking using two small satellites.

Objectives of mission

The demonstration of this technology is essential for futuristic missions such as sending an Indian astronaut to the moon, returning samples from the moon, and building and operation of an Indian Space Station.

The other objectives of the SpaDex mission include demonstration of the transfer of electric power between the docked spacecraft, which is essential for future applications, such as in-space robotics, composite spacecraft control and payload operations after undocking.

'Hubs to develop quantum technology made operational'

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

NQM was approved by the Cabinet in April 2023 at an outlay of ₹6,003.65 crore for eight years

The Centre has made operational "hubs" in four leading institutions to develop quantum computer technology and earmarked funds for them, according to information made public in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Uttar Pradesh, with an allocation of ₹28.7 crore during 2024-25, leads the States funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for developing quantum computer technology. The next two highest-funded States are Maharashtra at ₹3.34 crore and Karnataka at ₹3.7 crore. Delhi and Tamil Nadu follow at ₹2.4 crore and ₹1.7 crore, respectively.

The National Quantum Mission (NQM) was approved by the Union Cabinet in April 2023 at an outlay of ₹6,003.65 crore for a period of eight years. Under the NQM, four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) have been established in key technology verticals of quantum computing, quantum communication, quantum sensing & metrology and quantum materials & devices. These T-Hubs consist of 14 technical groups, covering 17 States and two Union Territories. Activities in these T-Hubs would include technology development, human resource development, entrepreneurship development and industry collaborations and international collaborations, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said as part of a written response.

Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, DST told *The Hindu* that the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur had been designated as a management coordinating centre for the hubs.

"Allocation to hubs, which started working two months ago, would be done in the forthcoming financial year and the money reflected was seed money for two months," he added.

The four hubs were to be located at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru; IIT-Bombay; IIT-Delhi and IIT-Madras. IIT-Kanpur was not one of the hubs. "All the hubs will get roughly equal amounts. The expected spend is nearly ₹1,500 crore in the coming year," he said.

Over 3,200 PMJAY hospitals must be penalised for fraud, regulation is required: NHA

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Vital scheme: AB-PMJAY benefits about 12.37 crore families in the country.

Almost 600 hospitals across India should be suspended and another 1,113 removed from the panel of the Centre's flagship health insurance scheme, and penalties totalling ₹122 crore should be levied against 1,504 errant hospitals, according to recommendations made by the National Health Authority's anti-fraud unit.

Noting the unit's report on the misuse of funds under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare expressed concern about the way some hospitals were carrying out such fraudulent activities as part of their business model.

Regulation is needed to check such fraud, the committee said in its report on the Demand for Grants tabled in Parliament on March 12.

AB-PMJAY provides annual health coverage worth ₹5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation, benefiting about 12.37 crore families from the economically vulnerable bottom 40% of India's population.

In its reply to the committee's report, the Department of Health and Family Welfare noted that the National Health Authority (NHA) has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards fraud and abuse, and has taken steps to prevent, detect, and deter different kinds of fraud at various stages of AB-PMJAY's implementation.

The committee recommended that the NHA implement a proactive, data-driven, and transparent monitoring system focusing on early detection of potential misuse patterns in AB-PMJAY.

The department can consider making extensive use of artificial intelligence and digital tools during the collection and analysis of statistical data and feedback, it added.

INA veteran celebrates 99th birthday by paying tributes to Netaji and fallen soldiers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Paying tribute: R. Madhavan Pillai lays a wreath at the National War Memorial at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Lieutenant Rangaswamy Madhavan Pillai, a veteran of the Indian National Army (INA), celebrated his 99th birthday on Thursday by laying wreaths at the National War Memorial and the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on Kartavya Path.

The wreath-laying ceremony organised by the Army was attended by senior military personnel and the public.

Lt. Pillai was born on March 13, 1926, in the Swryan township of Rangoon district in Burma (now Myanmar). He joined the Indian Independence League as a civilian in 1942 under Rash Behari Bose. When Netaji arrived in Singapore, Lt. Pillai formally enlisted in the INA, also known as the Azad Hind Fauj, on November 1, 1943, at the age of 17.

Serving as a recruiting officer and fundraiser, he mobilised support for the INA across 32 locations in Burma, including Hanthawaddy, Sawbwagale, Ywadanshe, Swryan, Yangon, and Mayongone. His active involvement in the freedom struggle led to his imprisonment for eight months in the Rangoon Jail from May to December 1945, officials said.

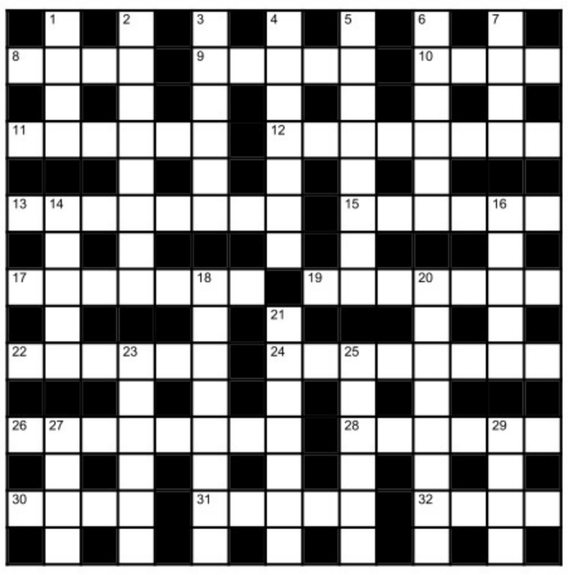
Later, he served in the administrative branch at the INA headquarters in Rangoon under Major General K.P. Thimayya (elder brother of former Army chief General K.S. Thimayya). He was officially recognised as a freedom fighter by the Government of India on August 1, 1980.

TH CROSSWORD + 14432

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Horrible leak results in expanse of water (4)
9 Gasps, "Trousers!" (5)
10 Burden upon you and me (4)
11 Thin piece from second organ (6)
12 Against small discs used to mark position in board games (8)
13 Pictorial way to depict canteen sales? (3,5)
15 As Veer can be unwilling, ... (6)
17 An appointment with the French promoter (7)
19 I learnt relocation may result in such detachment (7)
22 Pairs roamed around Eastern Iran in olden days (6)
24 True pear transplanted in hole (8)
26 "Sigh! A Han is running amok in Chinese city!" (8)
28 Current master is upset (6)
30 Part of sturgeon egg (4)
31 Right file is moved to search (5)
32 Clarkson's boats (4)

Down

1 Washington students constructing border protection? (4)
2 Avengers produce Sarin, for example (5,3)
3 Portion in South America forming ancient city (6)
4 Girl at Cochin prepared Italian dumplings (7)
5 Large curate changes side to kiss (8)
6 Perhaps, bootleggers source of income and courage (6)
7 Endlessly hurry around largest urban area in Germany (4)
14 Fruit and drink lying around shopping centre (5)
16 Ringo's sister hugs sailor (5)
18 See haters transform and still remain haters (8)
20 Bury Valerie, after leaving lake, in the meantime (8)
21 Government charges if rafts move (7)
23 Crookedly grins, carrying note for vocalist (6)
25 Tears flowing after European festival (6)
27 Instrument Oprah plays after losing ring (4)
29 Congress candidate from Kalkaji (4)

SUDOKU

	9		6					7
				5	7			
	6						3	4
	3	7						
4	8		3		6		1	2
						9	8	
8	4						5	
			8	1				
1					4		6	

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

		C	U	C	K	O	O	C	L	O	C	K		
P		H		A		N		A		A		I		A
E	X	A	M	S		S	I	D	E	K	I	C	K	S
L		I		T		I		E		S		K		T
M	A	R	K	A	N	T	O	N	Y		A	B	L	E
E				N		E		Z				A		R
T	A	B	L	E				H	A	T	R	A	C	K	S
		O		T						E		K		
S	C	O	R	S	E	S	E			M	U	S	I	C
A		K				T		A		E				R
D	E	S	K		P	R	I	M	A	D	O	N	N	A
I		T		T		E		N		Y		A		D
S	P	A	G	H	E	T	T	I		I	M	P	E	L
T		L		O		C		O		N		E		E
		L	A	U	G	H	I	N	G	G	A	S		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	8	4	2	1	7	3	9	5
3	9	5	4	8	6	1	7	2
1	2	7	3	9	5	4	8	6
8	1	2	6	3	4	7	5	9
5	4	6	8	7	9	2	3	1
7	3	9	1	5	2	6	4	8
4	7	8	9	2	1	5	6	3
2	6	3	5	4	8	9	1	7
9	5	1	7	6	3	8	2	4

FAITH

The spirit of Holi

Holi rings in the onset of spring and the end of bleak, dreary winter. The festival usually falls in the month of March as per the Gregorian calendar. It is celebrated in the month of Phagun, on the last full moon day of the Hindu solar calendar. The date varies with the lunar cycle, but the festival is a dear one to many across the world, said Prof. Kumool Abbi.

The night before Holi, bonfires are lit in a ceremony known as the *Holika dahan*. This is also known as *choti Holi*. Symbolically, it is a celebration of the victory of good over evil. The ritual is traced back to the time of King Hiranyakasipu, father of Prahlad. Hiranyakasipu was a ruthless and egotistical demon who had secured boons that bestowed special powers upon him that prevented him from getting killed by man or animal. His son Prahlad was steadfastly devoted to Lord Vishnu. This faith angered the father, who persecuted him cruelly.

Prahlad's aunt Holika tricked him into sitting on a fire with him on her lap. Holika was destroyed by the fire, but Prahlad was rescued by Vishnu, the upholder of dharma who took the form of half man, half lion, manifesting as Lord Nrisimha. He annihilated Hiranyakasipu but saved Prahlad.

The next day, Holi, known as Dhuli, is celebrated with gaiety and joy; lively colours are sprinkled everywhere. Holi is also celebrated in other regions of Asia, as well as in Caribbean countries like Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago. In Braj, the festival celebrates the holy, ethereal and heavenly love of Lord Krishna and Radha. The spirit of Holi is all-encompassing.

INBRIEF

Dr. Reddy's recalls mislabelled seizure injection in the U.S.

Drugmaker Dr. Reddy's Laboratories is recalling one batch of seizure injection Levetiracetam in 0.75% Sodium Chloride Injection, 1,000 mg/100 mL (10 mg/mL) single-dose infusion bags to the consumer level in the U.S. The infusion bag is incorrectly labelled as Levetiracetam in 0.82% Sodium Chloride Injection 500 mg/100 mL single-dose bag, while the aluminium overwrap packaging correctly identifies the product, the company said on Thursday.

LIC, New India Assurance, GIC Re retain D-SIIs tag

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), The New India Assurance Company and General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) have retained the domestic systemically important insurers (D-SIIs) tag. The three insurers have been identified as D-SIIs for 2024-25, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) said on the decisions and discussions at its 129th meeting on March 12.

Canara Bank proposes to raise ₹4,000 cr. via bonds

Canara Bank on Thursday said it proposed to raise up to ₹4,000 crore through Basel III-compliant Tier II bonds. According to a statement from the bank, the bond is rated AAA/Stable by Crisil and CARE and will have a tenor of 10-years with five year call option. The board of directors of the bank had approved to raise capital by way of Basel-III compliant Additional Tier I Bonds of ₹4,000 crore and Tier II bonds of ₹4,500 crore during FY 2024-25.

PV wholesales rose 2% in Feb., two-wheeler sales fell 9% YoY: SIAM

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Passenger vehicle (PV) domestic wholesales in February 2025 increased 2% year-on-year (YoY) to 3,77,689 units, according to SIAM data.

While three-wheeler wholesales rose 4.7% YoY to 57,788 units in February 2025, two-wheeler wholesales declined 9% to 13,84,605 units, according to the data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on Thursday.

Commenting on the performance, Rajesh Menon, director general, SIAM said, "The passenger vehicles segment remained resilient and posted its highest-ever sales of 3.78 lakh units in February 2025 with a growth of 1.9% as compared with February 2024." "Upcoming festivities of Holi and Ugadi in March are likely to continue to drive demand, thereby closing FY 2024-25 on a reasonably positive note," he added.

In three-wheelers, passenger carrier sales grew 6.8% to 46,111 units, while those of goods carriers surged 5.9% to 10,603 units. However, sales of e-rickshaws crashed 51% to 741 units and e-carts also saw 30.6% fall in sales to 333 units. Among two wheelers, the fall was more intense in mopeds, which shrank 18.2% YoY to 33,572 units. Quadricycle sales plunged 92% to just 3 units, as per SIAM data.

'Lenders funding emerging green projects at higher risk'

RBI Governor flags credit risk due to borrowers' use of new and emerging green technologies with limited track record; seeks effective mechanism for risk appraisal in financing such projects

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra flagged higher credit risks for lenders financing emerging green technologies with limited track record.

"One important aspect of green financing/lending for sustainable finance is the higher credit risk due to borrowers' use of new and emerging green technologies, which have relatively limited track record in terms of reliability, efficiency, and effectiveness," he said at an RBI event in New Delhi on Thursday.

Climate of safety
RBI Governor has emphasised on developing strategies to better appraise risks in financing projects that use green technologies

Sanjay Malhotra

- Impact of climate change risks is not limited to financial system, but extends to real economy
- A holistic approach needs to be adopted for mitigation of climate change risks
- Regulated entities should set up a pool via appropriate institutional arrangement to deal with the issue

"Regulated entities, therefore, need to develop suitable capacity and technical know-hows to better appraise risks in financing projects which use such green technologies," Mr. Malhotra emphasised.

Stating that the impact of climate change risks was not limited to the financial system alone, but extended to the real economy, he called for a "cohesive coordination and harmonisation" in approach among financial sector regulators, regulated entities and various government agencies. "There is a need to adopt a holistic approach towards mitigation of climate change risks considering the country specific requirements and circumstances," he said.

"Capacity and expertise constraints limit the ability to appraise and thus finance climate change mitigation. It also enhances the risk of funding such projects," he pointed out.

He urged regulated entities to 'seriously consider' setting up such a pool through an 'appropriate institutional arrangement' to deal with the issue.

Coromandel makes public offer to buy ₹402-cr. NACL stake

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The public offer follows Coromandel International planing to buy a majority 53% stake in NACL

Murugappa Group company Coromandel International has made a mandatory open offer to acquire 26% stake in NACL Industries from shareholders.

The offer follows Coromandel planing to buy a majority 53% stake in the company (formerly Nagarjuna Agrichem) from a promoter. The open offer is to acquire more than 5.24 crore equity shares of NACL Industries, constituting 26% of the voting share capital, at a price of ₹76.70 each, aggregating to more than ₹402.38 crore.

Collection efficiency in unsecured assets under pressure: ICRA

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Credit rating agency ICRA Ltd. said it has observed a decline in collection efficiency for unsecured asset classes such as microfinance, personal and unsecured SME loans amid current economic headwinds.

It said the collections of the microfinance pools had dropped to 90% in Q3 FY2025 from previous highs of 97% at the beginning of the fiscal.

Collections in the SME segment also weakened in FY25, especially in the unsecured asset class, where the efficiency ranged between 85-92% for 9M FY2025, it said in a report.

The collection efficiency for personal loans reduced to 88% in December 2024 from 92% seen in March 2024 in ICRA-rated pools," the rating agency said.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	73,829	-0.27
US Dollar	87.05	0.19
Gold	89,450	0.67
Brent oil	70.20	-0.94

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2221.10	-20.70
Adani Ports	1119.20	-9.10
Apollo Hosp	6105.65	-38.10
Asian Paints	2231.30	-20.00
Axis Bank	1010.20	-1.00
Bajaj Auto	7504.70	-10.35
Bajaj Finserv	1807.45	-12.00
Bajaj Finance	8420.45	-64.00
Bharat Elec	280.07	3.24
Bharti Airtel	1632.50	-10.35
BPCL	264.41	-1.91
Britannia Ind	4728.25	-63.80
Cipla	1461.90	7.60
Coal India	378.30	-2.40
Dr Reddys Lab	1107.95	2.80
Eicher Motors	5015.25	-2.20
Grasim Ind	2370.20	-28.70
HCL Tech	1534.75	-5.85
HDFC Bank	1706.60	-4.55
HDFC Life	622.40	-9.60
Hero MotoCorp	3529.15	-81.10
Hindalco	677.35	-12.50
Hind Unilever	2174.80	-18.10
ICICI Bank	1250.05	6.10
IndusInd Bank	672.35	-12.35
Infosys	1579.85	-11.00
ITC	412.05	-0.35
JSW Steel	1001.20	-9.20
Kotak Bank	1985.10	2.55
L&T	3187.30	-6.35
M&M	2643.50	-9.80
Maruti Suzuki	11513.80	-126.30
NestleIndia	2191.95	-3.55
NTPC	331.90	1.75
ONGC	225.43	1.03
PowerGrid Corp	267.65	0.55
Reliance Ind	1247.90	-9.15
SBI Life	1385.55	-23.45
State Bank	727.85	4.80
Shriram Finance Ltd.	619.55	-17.40
Sun Pharma	1683.45	6.60
TataConsumerProduct	946.10	0.65
Tata Motors	655.50	-12.80
Tata Steel	150.88	0.58
TCS	3511.05	4.85
Tech Mahindra	1440.65	2.35
Titan	3010.15	-8.80
Trent Ltd.	5022.40	7.05
UltraTech Cement	10452.10	-68.30
Wipro	264.00	-4.55

EASTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF A.P. LTD
Corporate Office, P&T Colony, Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam-530 013.
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR
Termination and testing of already laid 218Km of 96F OFC Cable under RAPDRP Project to bring into service and also Operations & Maintenance for a period of 10 Years in Visakhapatnam City.
EoI No:CGM/O&CS/APEPDCL/VSP/01/2024-25
Further details can be viewed in **www.apeasternpower.com**
Ph : 9440814370, 9440812567 Advt-82 **Chief General Manager/O&CS**

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
e-Procurement Tender Notice (Paper Notification)
TGSPDCL intends to float tender for procurement of (a) IED Relays (b) Smart CT Meters for DTRs (c) MS Structural Steel Materials on e-procurement platform.
For further details of each item above, please visit www.tgsouthernpower.org www.tender.telangana.gov.in. Phone: 040-23431360, 1033, 1035, 1026
R.O. No.: 1138-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER (P&MM)

BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Stores & Purchases Department, Central Offices, K.H. Road, Shantinagar, Bengaluru-560 027.
No.: BMTC/CO/COSP/TENDER/15/2024-25 Date: 13.03.2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
BMTC invites tender for procurement of the following Goods through KPP Portal.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Description	Last date for bid submission in KPP portal
		Short-Term Tender	
1	BMTC/2024-25/ SE0730/CALL-2	Selection of Technology Solution provider for Supply, Commissioning and Maintenance of Smart Electronic Ticketing Machines with Comprehensive ticketing Solution on Rental Basis for BMTC	21-03-2025 at 11.30Hrs
		Regular Tender	
2	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0171	Procurement of ERW GI Square Tubes / Round Pipes	28-03-2025 at 17.00Hrs
3	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0162/CALL-2	Procurement of Polyurethane Sealent	28-03-2025 at 17.00Hrs
4	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0146/CALL-2	Procurement of Tie Rod, Drag Link & Repair Kits	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
5	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0172	Procurement of Wheel Bolt & Nuts.	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
6	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0150/CALL-2	Procurement of Piston Assembly & Ring Sets.	28-03-2025 at 17.00Hrs
7	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0173	Procurement of Cold Applied Self Adhesive Polymer Modified Bituminous composite membrane with Aluminium Foil at the Top (Plastic Felt).	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
8	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0159/CALL-2	Procurement of Different types of Rear view and Side view Mirrors	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
9	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0100/CALL-2	Procurement of Engine Valves, Guides & Inserts	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
10	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0174	Procurement of Automotive Glasses	15-04-2025 at 17:00Hrs
11	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0175	Procurement of Vinyl Flooring Mat	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
12	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0069/CALL-2	Procurement of Conductor Leather Cash Bag	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs
13	BMTC/2024-25/ IND097/ CALL-3	Procurement of PCTR and Allied Items	15-04-2025 at 17:00Hrs
		Corrigendum: The last date & time for submission of tender in kpp-portal is extended as under.	
14	BMTC/2024-25/ IND0164	Procurement of Head Lamp Assembly & Accessories.	28-03-2025 at 17:00Hrs

The above mentioned tender details can be obtained from **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Further, any addendum/corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, other tender terms and conditions etc. will be uploaded /published through kpp portal only.
Note: Interested Bidders need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information login to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** in case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell phone No:080-22230960, 080-22234115, may also contact e-procurement for training on bid submission. Mail to **support@eprochelppdesk.com** for further information required.
Sd/- CONTROLLER OF STORES AND PURCHASES (Tender Inviting Authority)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MEGA LIFT, BHUBANESWAR.
Plot No: A-8/2, 1st Floor, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar - 751022 (Odisha)
ମୁଖ୍ୟଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ବୃହତ୍ ଉଠା ଜଳସେଚନଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର
ପ୍ଲଟ ନଂ: ଏ-୮/୨, ପ୍ରଥମ ମହଲା, ଭୋଇ ନଗର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର – ୭୫୧୦୨୨ (ଓଡ଼ିଶା)
E-Mail : cemegalift-eicwr.od@nic.in ; Ph.: 91-0674-2567252 ; Fax - 91-0674-2567258
No. 2608 / Dated. 12.03.25
Tender Cancellation Notice
Bid Identification No. 06ML/2024-25
The Tender for the work "Operation and Maintenance of existing 13 no. of schemes on Tel Basin having command area between 500 Ha. to 2000 Ha. in Megalift **Cluster-XIV** in the districts of Kalahandi & Bolangir comprising all electro-mechanical & instrumentation equipments installed in pump house & MCC room including pumps and motors, switchyard & Transmission lines, intake well, Sump well, Rising main, Distribution chamber, Gravity main, complete distribution network by UGPL covering culturable command area of 14069.84 Ha. with operation of maintenance of all its 13 completed schemes including its power system connectivity, proper distribution of water to the ayacut including watch & ward with testing and calibration of all electro-mechanical components before the start of each irrigation period in the O & M period of 10 years on "Turn-key basis" invited vide Bid Identification No. 06ML/2024-25 is hereby cancelled in accordance with direction communicated vide DoWR Ltr No.6935 dt.11.03.2025.
Chief Engineer, Megalift, Bhubaneswar.
A-1196 : OIPR-32504/11/0025/2425

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MEGA LIFT, BHUBANESWAR.
Plot No: A 8/2, 1st Floor, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar - 751022 (Odisha)
ମୁଖ୍ୟଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ବୃହତ୍ ଉଠା ଜଳସେଚନଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର
ପ୍ଲଟ ନଂ: ଏ-୮/୨, ପ୍ରଥମ ମହଲା, ଭୋଇ ନଗର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର – ୭୫୧୦୨୨ (ଓଡ଼ିଶା)
E-Mail : cemegalift-eicwr.od@nic.in ; Ph.: 91-0674-2567252 ; Fax - 91-0674-2567258
No. 2619 / Dated. 12.03.25
Tender Cancellation Notice
Bid Identification No.07ML/2024-25
The Tender for the work "Operation and Maintenance of existing 15 nos. schemes with intake points in Tel Basin having command area between 500 Ha. to 2000 Ha. in Megalift **Cluster-XV** in the districts of Sonepur, Boudh & Bolangir comprising all electro-mechanical & instrumentation equipments installed in pump house & MCC room including pumps and motors, switchyard & Transmission lines, intake well, Sump well, Rising main, Distribution chamber, Gravity main, complete distribution network by UGPL covering culturable command area of 20404.69 Ha. with operation of maintenance of all its 15 completed schemes including its power system connectivity, proper distribution of water to the ayacut including watch & ward with testing and calibration of all electro-mechanical components before the start of each irrigation period in the O & M period of 10 years on "Turn-key basis." invited vide Bid Identification No.07ML/2024-25 is hereby cancelled in accordance with direction communicated vide DoWR Ltr No. 6935 dt. 11.03.2025
Chief Engineer, Megalift, Bhubaneswar.
A-1198 : OIPR-32504/11/0022/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER & BASIN MANAGER, TEL BASIN, BHAWANIPATNA
E-mail ID :- cetelbasinbhp@gmail.com / Phone No: 06670-230209
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
E-Procurement Notice No:- CE&BM, TEL - 03/2024-25 : Bid Identification No: CETEL-KID-02/2024-25
The Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Tel Basin, Bhawanipatna on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on-line **percentage rate tender** (P-1) through e-procurement in **double cover system for execution of work.**
Table - 1: ***Details of Critical Dates, details of work, Bid Security***

Pkg. No.	Name of works	Approx. Tender Cost	Class of Contractor	Bid Security / EMD (Online) (in INR)	Cost of tender document (online) (in INR)	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Construction of Left Flood Bank of River Udanti from village Khoelpala to Borda of Kalahandi district.	Rs.7,23,73,931/- (Excluding G.S.T)	'A' Class and 'Special' Class	Rs.7,23,739/-	Rs.10,000/-	24 (Twenty Four) Calendar Months

Table-2 : e-Procurement Details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender on-line for bidding		Date of Seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender		Place of Opening
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Tel Basin, Bhawanipatna	CETEL-KID 02/2024-25	Dt. 18.03.2025 at 11.00 hours	Dt. 10.04.2025 up to 17.00 hours	Dt.18.03.2025 to 05.04.2025 at Office during office hours	Dt. 11.04.2025 at 11.00 Hours	To be intimated after evaluation of Technical Bid	Office of Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Tel Basin, Bhawanipatna

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Web site www.tendersodisha.gov.in
*Other Terms & conditions can be seen from the Government website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
*The Corrigendum/ cancellation of Tender, if any, will be uploaded and can be seen from the above website only.
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Tel Basin, Bhawanipatna
A-1180 : OIPR-32317/11/0006/2425

PURABI DAIRY
WEST ASSAM MILK PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVE UNION LTD.
R.K. Jyoti Prasad Agarwala Road, Panjabari, Guwahati-781037, Assam
Phone: +91 69001 81122, E-mail: info@purabi.coop
Website: http://www.purabi.coop
WAMUL/NDDB: MPACS/MDCS/2024-25 Date: 14.03.2025
Tender Notice
West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited(Purabi Dairy) under the grant-in-aid for "Supporting Multipurpose PACS/MDCS" from National Dairy Development Board invites eligible bidders to participate in the tenders as described below:

Sl. No.	Description	Date of publishing Tender	Last date of submission of Quotations
1	SS Milk Cans (40 Ltr Capacity)	20-03-2025	10-04-2025
2	Milk Analyzer	20-03-2025	10-04-2025

The details of the E-tender will be published and available at www.assamtenders.gov.in as mentioned above. If any corrigendum is issued, it will be published in www.assamtenders.gov.in on or before last date and time of submission of bid. No separate notification for publication of corrigendum or extension of last date of submission of bid will be made through Newspaper advertisement.
Sd/-Dy. Manager Purchase &Store, WAMUL

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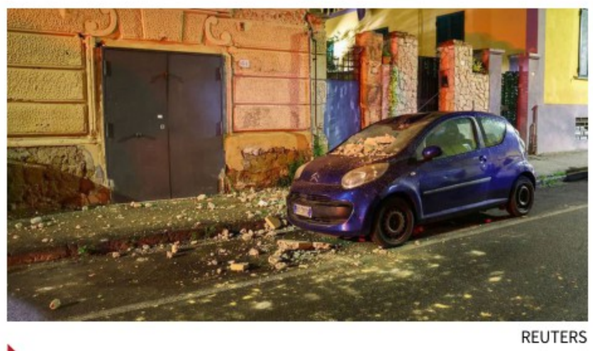
INDIA TAKES THE WORLD CUP IN GRAND STYLE
CBI charge-sheet indicts Raju, corporate bigwigs, 3 firms
Farm inputs to be supplied by May 15
JSS PUBLIC SCHOOL BAGE
Preserve your special moments in time with iconic front pages from our archives.
Scan the code or visit https://newsth.live/framepage to buy or gift a front-page collectible.

ROME

Naples struck by a 4.4-magnitude earthquake causing minor damage



REUTERS

A 4.4-magnitude earthquake struck Naples early Thursday, causing minor damage and injuring 11 people. Centred near Pozzuoli, the strongest quake in 40 years affected buildings, forcing evacuations and school closures. Residents, fearing aftershocks, stayed outdoors as inspections continued. AP

NEW YORK

Protesters occupy Trump Tower after arrest of Columbia student

AP

Protests led by Jewish Voice for Peace — which describes itself as a progressive Jewish anti-Zionist organization — erupted at Trump Tower in New York City over Mahmoud Khalil's detention, a Columbia University student arrested on Saturday for pro-Palestinian activism. Mr. Khalil faces deportation. REUTERS

ADDIS ABABA

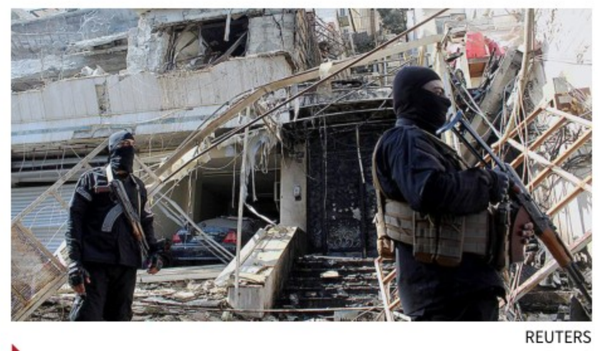
Tigray regional government seeks aid as TPLF faction seizes towns

AP

The interim government of Ethiopia's Tigray region appealed for the Ethiopian federal government to intervene after a faction of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) seized control of two major towns, leaving several people suffering with gunshot wounds and raising fears of a return to civil war. AP

JERUSALEM

Israel Defence Minister confirms conducting air strike in Damascus



REUTERS

Defence Minister Israel Katz confirmed the Israeli Air Force conducted an air strike in Damascus on Thursday, with the military saying it had struck a "command centre" of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group. A war monitor reported one person killed. Syrian state media said Israel had struck a building in Damascus. AFP

Putin backs truce idea, but calls for more talks with U.S.

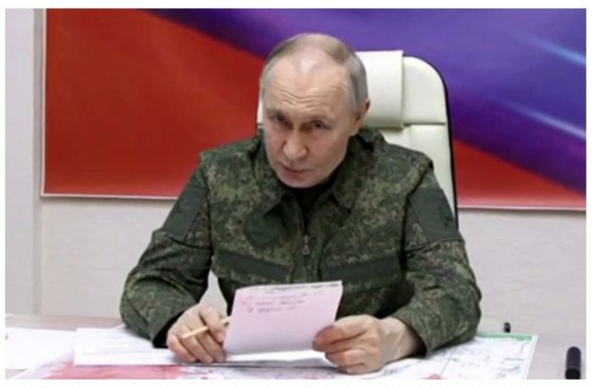
We agree with the proposals to cease hostilities, but this cessation should lead to long-term peace and eliminate the original causes of this crisis, Putin says, adding he might call Trump for talks

Reuters
Associated Press
MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Russia agreed with U.S. proposals for a ceasefire in Ukraine but that any ceasefire would have to deal with the root causes of the conflict and that many details needed to be sorted out.

"We agree with the proposals to cease hostilities," Mr. Putin told reporters at a news conference in the Kremlin following talks with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

"But we proceed from the fact that this cessation should be such that it would lead to long-term peace and would eliminate the original causes of this crisis." Russian forces have been advancing since mid-2024 and control nearly a fifth of Ukraine's territory, three years into a war that U.S. President Donald Trump has said he will halt. Mr. Trump had said in the White House on Wednesday that he hoped the Kremlin would agree to the U.S. proposal for a 30-day ceasefire that Ukraine said it would support, to end what Trump called the "bloodbath".



Rigid stance: Vladimir Putin visits a command point for the Kursk group of troops involved in the offensive in the Kursk region. AFP

Mr. Putin thanked Mr. Trump for his efforts to end the war. "The idea itself is correct, and we certainly support it," Mr. Putin said. "But there are issues that we need to discuss. And I think we need to talk to our American colleagues as well." Mr. Putin said he might call Mr. Trump to discuss the issue. "We support the idea of ending this conflict by peaceful means."

He noted that Ukrainian troops are encircled in their last foothold in Russia's Kursk region, and it's necessary to determine before a ceasefire whether they will lay down weapons and surrender.

He also noted the need to develop a mechanism to control possible breaches of the truce. Another issue, he said, is whether Ukraine could use the 30-day ceasefire to continue mobilization and rearmament.

Mr. Putin noted that while it appeared that the U.S. persuaded Ukraine to accept a ceasefire, Ukraine is interested in that because of the battlefield situation, noting that Ukrainian troops that launched an incursion into Russia's Kursk region would be fully blocked in the coming days. "In these conditions, I believe it would be good for the Ukrainian side to secure a ceasefire for at least 30 days," he said

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry claimed that it recaptured the town of Sudzha, a Ukrainian operational hub in Kursk, hours after Mr. Putin visited his commanders in Kursk.

Guterres visits Bangladesh to assess state of Rohingyas

Associated Press
DHAKA

UN Secretary-General António Guterres is on a four-day visit to assess the situation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh as fears mount of serious aid cuts following Washington's decision to shut down USAID operations.

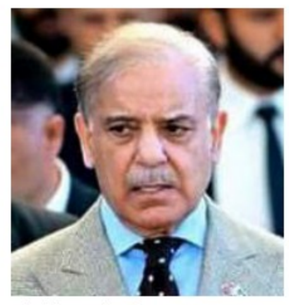
Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs adviser Touhid Hossain welcomed Mr. Guterres at Dhaka's main airport on Thursday.

Pakistan PM visits Quetta as militants say standoff still on

Reuters
QUETTA

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Balochistan province on Thursday, as dozens of people rescued from a train hijacked by separatist militants arrived in Quetta after security forces killed 33 attackers to end a day-long standoff.

Mr. Sharif's visit came even as insurgent group, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which claimed responsibility for the attack, refuted the military's claim that the standoff had ended, saying that the "battle" was continuing and it still had hostages.



Shehbaz Sharif

Militants blew up the rail tracks and opened fire on the Jaffar Express as it made its way to Peshawar in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, on Tuesday.

The militants are fighting a decades-long insurgency to win secession of the southwestern province A total of 21 hostages and four security troops were killed in the standoff, according to the military, but the BLA – the largest of Balochistan's armed ethnic groups battling the government – said 50 hostages were executed.

Beijing calls for 'dialogue' to resolve U.S. trade tensions

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China on Thursday called for "dialogue" with Washington to resolve spiralling trade tensions that have seen the world's two largest economies impose a slew of tariffs on each other's imports.

"China has always advocated that China and the U.S. should adopt a positive and cooperative attitude towards differences and controversies in economic and trade fields," Commerce Ministry spokesperson He Yongqian said. "But it must be stressed that any form of communication must be based on mutual respect, and mutual benefit."

> It must be stressed that any form of communication must be based on mutual respect and mutual benefit
>
> **HE YONGQIAN**
> Commerce Ministry spokesperson

China also vowed on Wednesday to take "all necessary measures" to protect its interests in response to separate new U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminium imports.

Emirati diplomat delivers Trump's letter to Iran's FM

Associated Press
DUBAI

An Emirati diplomat earlier identified by Tehran as carrying a letter from U.S. President Donald Trump seeking to jump-start talks over Iran's rapidly advancing nuclear program met on Wednesday with Iran's Foreign Minister in the Iranian capital.

Iranian state television showed Emirati official Anwar Gargash meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Tehran.

It is unclear how Iran will react to the letter, which Mr. Trump revealed during a television interview last week. Its intended recipient, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said he is not interested in talks with a "bullying government".

But Iran struggles with economic woes exacerbated by United States and Western sanctions over its nuclear program, and Mr. Trump has imposed more since he took office in January.

That pressure, coupled with internal turmoil in Iran and recent direct attacks by Israel, has put Tehran in one of the most precarious positions its theocracy has faced since its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Tougher measures needed to counter stepped-up Chinese infiltration, says Lai

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Taiwanese President William Lai Ching-te said on Thursday tougher measures are needed to counter stepped-up Chinese infiltration, spying and other efforts to weaken the island's defences and speed Beijing's goal of taking control of the self-governing island republic, a close U.S. partner.

Mr. Lai cited a range of recent incidents involving China that fall into a "gray area" including psychological warfare short of open armed conflict.

Beijing's efforts to "subvert, obtain secrets, lure members of the armed forces and influence public opinion to lose confidence in our national defence require that we step up our legal safeguards to prevent and detect such incidents," Mr. Lai said at a news conference. He said proposed measures to counter China's moves included bringing back military trials for crimes such as spying and making it more difficult for residents from China and the Chinese territories of Hong Kong, and Macau to obtain Taiwanese identification, a task made more difficult by widespread intermarriage between Taiwanese and Chinese.

Lai Ching-te

Mr. Lai's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) favours the island's continued de-facto independence from Beijing. China has refused almost all official contact with the DPP since Mr. Lai's predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, was elected eight years ago.

TNPL TAMILNADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED
Kagithapuram - 639 136. Karur Dist. Tamil Nadu.
Email : purchase.fuel@tnpl.co.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.	Material Description	Due date
242513 007041	Steaming (Non-Coking) Coal in Bulk (Imported) with 4200 GAR of Indonesian origin.	28.03.2025

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. Detailed Terms & conditions are available in tender document at our website: www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app.
DIPR/991/Tender/2025 — *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

Wheels India Limited
Regd Office : 21, Patullos Road, Chennai – 600 002
CIN : L35921TN1960PLC004175
Phone : 044-2623 4300; Fax : 044-26257121
Website : www.wheelsindia.com
Invites offers from interested parties for purchase of Mild Steel scrap items, for the two month period APR - MAY 2025.
Details of the items available for disposal and tender terms and conditions can be had from the Company on written request.
Sealed offers can be submitted to the **Sr. Vice President (Supply Chain),** Wheels India Limited, Padi, Chennai - 600 050 **to reach on or before 31st MARCH 2025.**

PUNJAB STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
SCO 74-75, BANK SQUARE, SECTOR-17B CHANDIGARH
PBX: 0172-5197847, 5197846
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
PSWC invites online tenders through GeM Portal for creation of 2.40 LMT godown capacities in the State of Punjab for guaranteed lease of 10 years on Build, Own and Lease basis for storage requirements of FCI under two bid system 'Technical Bid' and 'Financial Bid'.
NIT (alongwith GeM Bid IDs) is available on Department's website i.e. https://pswc.in
Note: Any corrigendum(s)/Notification(s) to this Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be published Department's website & GeM Portal.
PSWC/12/66/2023/42592

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
Office of the Executive Engineer,
(SWD, Bommanahalli Zone), 9th Floor, Shopping Complex,
4th Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560 011.
No.EE/SWD-BOM/Corri-1/01/2024-25 Date: 13.03.2025
CORRIGENDUM-1
(Through GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only)
Ref: This office Tender Notification : EE/SWD-BOM/TEND/01/2024-25, Dated: 03.03.2025
This is to notify that due to technical reasons, the above tender notification should be read as the New Calendar of events is as below.

Calendar of Events	As per Modified Dates
1. Tender documents may be downloaded from the KPP Portal of GOK from	06.03.2025
2. Last Date for receipt of Tenders Document	04.04.2025, 4:00 p.m.
3. Opening of Technical Bid	05.04.2025, 4:30 p.m.
4. Opening of Financial Bid	07.04.2025

All other Terms and Conditions of the notification remains the same.
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
SWD, Bommanahalli Zone, BBMP.

Karnataka State Medical Supplies Corporation Limited
No.1, Dr. Siddaiah Puranik Road, KHB Colony, Magadi Road,
Bangalore – 560079. Phone: +91-80-29619801, Email: md.ksmscl@gmail.com
No: KSMSCL/DRUGS/RETND/NVHCP/HEPATITIS-B/38/2024-25 Date: 13.03.2025
TENDER NOTIFICATION
Ref. Tender Notification No: KSMSCL/DRUGS/RETND/NVHCP/HEPATITIS-B/38/2024-25 (IND0215)
Nationwide Tender is invited through e-Tendering system under KTPP Act 1999 and Rules 2000 for the following tender:
"Re-Tender for the supply of Hepatitis B Vaccine under NVHCP/NHM Programme-2023-24"
Details regarding EMD, Terms and Conditions and other information are available in the Tender Document, which can be downloaded from the website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 13.03.2025. The eligible tenderers shall submit their e-tenders under e-procurement platform for above mentioned tenders. Further information if any may be obtained from this office.
DIPR/CP/5633/SSC/2024-25
Sd/-
Managing Director
KSMSCL, Bangalore

राजस्थान सरकार
कार्यालय चिकित्सा अधीक्षक, प्रिंस बिजय सिंह मेमोरियल (पी.बी.एम.) सम्बद्ध चिकित्सालय वर्ग, बीकानेर
फोन: 0151-2226304; Fax:- 0151-2528814, E-mail: supdt.rajasthan.gov.in
क्रमांकः- ए.जी.एच./लेखा(क्रय)/2025/6507 दिनांकः 03.03.2025
ई-बोली आमंत्रण सूचना (E-NIB No.: 08/2024-25)
पी.बी.एम. चिकित्सालय के अधीन मुख्यमंत्री निःशुल्क दवा वितरण केन्द्रों व सब स्टोर I & II में 101 कार्य बिन्दुओं पर प्राप्त दवा पर्चीयों को ऑनलाईन करवाने का कार्य जॉब बेसिस आधार पर (COMPUTER MACHINE WITH MAN) पूर्ण माह करवाये जाने हेतु आमंत्रित निविदा (दोहरी बिड पद्धति) में इच्छुक बोलीदाता दिनांक 15.03.2025 से 27.03.2025 सायं 05:00 बजे तक निविदा डाउनलोड/अपलोड कर सकते हैं। बोली आमंत्रण सूचना की महत्वपूर्ण शर्तें व पूर्ण विवरण http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in तथा http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है। ई-बोली की अनुमानित लागत 2 करोड़ है।
UBN No.: MCB2425SLRC00215
चिकित्सा अधीक्षक
प्रिंस बिजय सिंह मेमोरियल (पी.बी.एम.)
सम्बद्ध चिकित्सालय वर्ग, बीकानेर
DIPR/C/3455/2025

ANDHRA PRADESH POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LIMITED
NOTIFICATION for APGENCO e-Procurement
NIT No.610001875
APGENCO invites open tender for Design, Engineering, Offering for Inspection, Supply, Packing, Forwarding, Loading including Freight, Transit Insurance & unloading at site, of the Materials (Mechanical, Electrical & C&I), required for modification of coarse ash evacuation of APH & Duct hoppers of 500MW Stage-IV/Dr.NTTPS from dry mode into wet mode up to ash slurry sump including Erection, Testing, Commissioning of the supplied Equipment and conducting PG Test, through APGENCO e-procurement platform.
Estimated Value of contract : Rs.1,37,25,000/-
Schedule available date & time : from 12.03.2025 onwards
Bid submission closing date & time : 13:00 Hrs on 02.04.2025
For other details visit website, viz. www.apgenco.gov.in or https://etender.apgenco.gov.in/irj/portal
DIPR 3600PP/CL, Dt.13-03-2025

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, SWD, West Zone,
9th Floor, Jayanagar Shopping Complex,
4th Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560 011
No.: EE/SWD/West/Tend/04/2024-25 Date: 13.03.2025
CORRIGENDUM-1
(Through GOK KPP Portal Only) TWO COVER SYSTEM
Reference: This office Tender Notification No.: EE/SWD/West/Tend/04/2024-25, Dated: 03.03.2025
This is to notify that due to technical reasons, the above tender notification should be read as:
The new calender of events is as below.

Sl. No.	Calender of Events	As per modified dates
1	Last date for receipt of tender document	04.04.2025, 4:00 p.m.
2	Date of opening of Technical bid	05.04.2025, 4:30 p.m.
3	Date of opening of Financial bid	07.04.2025

All other terms and conditions of the notification remains the same.
Sd/-, Executive Engineer, SWD, West Zone, BBMP

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
Office of the Executive Engineer, SWD-Dasarahalli Zone,
9th Floor, Jayanagara Shopping Complex, 4th block,
Jayanagara, Bengaluru-560 011.
No EE/SWD/DHZ/Tend/01/2024-25 Dated: 13.03.2025
CORRIGENDUM-1 (Two Cover System)
(Through e-Procurement Portal GOK website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only)
Reference: This office Tender Notification No:EE/SWD/DHZ/Tend/01/2024-25 Dated: 03.03.2025.
This is to notify that due to technical reasons, the above tender notification should be read as The new calendar of events is as below.

Sl no	Calendar of events	As per modified dates
1	Last date for receipt of tender document	04.04.2025 16:00 hours
2	Date of opening of Technical bid	05.04.2025 16:30 hours
3	Date of opening of Financial bid	07.04.2025

All other Terms and Conditions of the notification remains the same.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, SWD, Dasarahalli Zone

BIG BLOW

Injury rules Giants' all-rounder Dottin out of the Eliminator

FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Gujarat Giants' all-rounder Deandra Dottin was ruled out of the WPL Eliminator against Mumbai Indians due to an injury. After winning the toss, skipper Ashleigh Gardner, said, "Dani Gibson comes in for Deandra Dottin. It happened five minutes ago because of an injury. Really unfortunate for such a big game".

'UNFAIR'

Prefer the 'no impact player' provision, says Jemimah

FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Delhi Capitals vice-captain Jemimah Rodrigues is happy that the WPL does not have the IPL's impact player provision. "I'd prefer playing this way. It's unfair to the bowlers when you do so well and have done so much and then towards the end, a proper batter comes in for the opposition," she said.

PLAINSPEAK

Verstappen feels Red Bull 'not the quickest at the moment'

AP

Max Verstappen said that Red Bull was "not the quickest at the moment" ahead of the Australian Grand Prix, but warned it could change as the campaign progresses. "We'll try to do our best. There's not really much more that we can do. Testing is not many days so we found areas we can work on and that's what we'll continue to do."

RARING TO GO

Hamilton upbeat but realistic ahead of season opener

GETTY IMAGES

Lewis Hamilton said on Thursday he was itching to get going during the "most exciting period of my life" at Ferrari, but cautioned of a transition period as he gets used to a new car. "Obviously three days in the car, difficult to know where we stand with everyone else. But we just try to keep our heads down and just focus on our job," he said.

Sciver-Brunt. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Sciver-Brunt making the most of her purple patch

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Nat Sciver-Brunt has some significant firsts to her name, the latest being the first to make 400 runs in a WPL season. That was just six weeks after she became the first batter to make 50-plus scores in six successive women's Tests.

Back in 2016, she hit the WBBL's first ever six. In the inaugural edition of the WPL in 2023, she was the Player-of-the-Match in the Eliminator and the final, helping Mumbai Indians win the trophy.

She had been bought for ₹3.2 crore in the league's first auction. "That was pretty mad actually; we were playing a World Cup match whilst the auction was happening," Sciver-Brunt told *The Hindu*. "So in our team, some people found out before the game, some people found out after the game. So that whole day was a bit surreal really. I started playing cricket when we weren't paid and I played in the first WBBL, all the money from which I spent quickly."

Winning the WPL title was really special, said the England all-rounder. "Everyone had a really good year. So if one person wasn't able to perform on that day, the next person would. Personally I peaked at the right time for that tournament, which was really special."

This season has also been special for her, having rattled up scores like 80 not out, 57, 42, 75 not out, 37, 38, 69 and 77. And she has also picked up nine wickets.

Sciver-Brunt says Alyssa Healy is the toughest batter she has bowled to. She also has high regard for Harmanpreet Kaur, her captain at Mumbai Indians.

"Harman is always open to that communication with us all, and wants to learn from those experiences that are on the bench," she said. "She has got a switch that she can flick at any time, really. She can just accelerate things with the bat like I haven't really seen anyone else do."

Mumbai Indians cuts Giants to size

Matthews and Sciver-Brunt set up the platform for a mammoth total; poor catching hurts the Gujarat side and the batters too fail to get going

Blazing away: Matthews cut loose after a rather slow start. EMMANUAL YOGINI

WPL

Vivek Krishnan
MUMBAI

When Hayley Matthews and Nat Sciver-Brunt are in the mood for classy ball-striking, there's seemingly little that opponents can do beyond watching and quietly admiring sheer mastery unfold in front of their eyes. Gujarat Giants was largely left to do just that in the Eliminator of the Women's Premier League (WPL) at Brabourne Stadium on Thursday.

Matthews and Sciver-Brunt smashed 77 each to help MI reach 213 for four – its highest WPL total. For the second time this season, in fact, they forged a 133-run second-wicket partnership.

Harmanpreet Kaur also played her part with a cameo of 36 at a strike rate of 300. With GG skittled out for 166, MI advanced to Saturday's final against Delhi Capitals.

It didn't look like MI would get to such a daunting total when it was 37 for one in six overs. Matthews was sedate at the start, and even had a slice of fortune on five when an edge was spilled by Beth Mooney in Ashleigh Gardner's opening over. It was the first of many catches that GG dropped on the night.

Once the field spread out, Sciver-Brunt and Matthews began belting a plethora of boundaries. Matthews found her fluency against Priya Mishra, welcoming the leg-spinner in the eighth over with three consecutive fours.

Having ambled to 17 off 22 deliveries after the first seven overs, Matthews still reached her fifty off just 36 deliveries. The landmark was achieved in style, pulling Tanuja Kanwer for a maximum.

Sciver-Brunt was at her belligerent best at the other end. Her half-century, off 29 balls, came via a flat-batted six over deep midwicket. It also brought up the 100-run stand.

For GG to hunt down the target, it needed its in-form batters to not put a foot wrong.

That wasn't the case. Mooney drove Shabnim Ismail to slip in the very first over while Harleen Deol was run out in the fifth over. Gardner did smoke Matthews out of the park off her second ball, but was cleaned up by the offie in the same over.

The scores: Mumbai Indians 213/4 in 20 overs (Matthews 77, Sciver-Brunt 77, Harmanpreet 36, Danielle Gibson 2/40) bt Gujarat Giants 166 in 19.2 overs (Gibson 34, Phoebe Litchfield 31, Bharti Fulmali 30, Matthews 3/31, Amelia Kerr 2/28).
Toss: GG; **PoM:** Matthews.
Final (Saturday): Delhi Capitals vs Mumbai Indians, 7.30 p.m.

Do Pant's Super Giants have the firepower to go the distance?

Tarun Shastry

Rishabh Pant made headlines across the cricketing world when Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) went hammer and tongs to acquire his services for a jaw-dropping ₹27 crore at the Indian Premier League (IPL) mega-auction a few months ago, setting a new benchmark for player acquisitions.

LSG is now gearing up for what promises to be an exciting campaign under his leadership.

Over the past three seasons, the Lucknow outfit has steadily built a competitive team by blending experience with emerging talent. This combination helped the side reach the playoffs in 2022 and 2023. However, in 2024, things didn't go as planned for the franchise, as it ended up seventh.

With a revamped squad, the Super Giants will be aiming for a strong start to the season. The team will rely on Mitchell Marsh, who can dismantle any bowling attack on his day, along with the in-form David Miller. Marsh, who is returning from a back injury, is expected to play only as a batter.

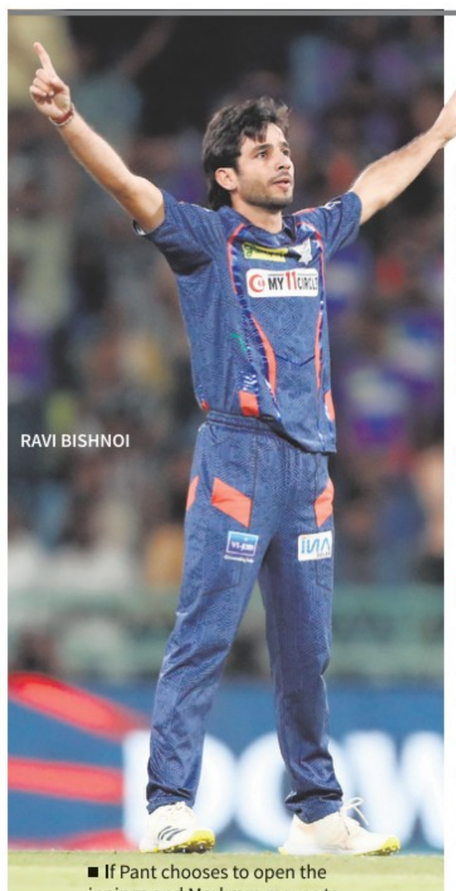
Miller was instrumental in the Gujarat Titans' championship victory in 2022, scoring 481 runs at a strike rate of 142.72. The southpaw will look to replicate his success with the Lucknow side this season.

Aiden Markram is also expected to add significant fire-power to the batting line-up. Additionally, the side will look up to the explosive Nicholas Pooran to provide the final flourish while hoping the domestic players step up when required.

If LSG is to succeed, Ravi Bishnoi will have to play a crucial role this season along with Pant. Bishoni's fast and sharp googlies, along with his knack for breaking partnerships, will keep the Super Giants in the hunt. He could prove to be a handful not only at home but also while playing away, especially on slow and low surfaces.

Akash Deep, Avesh Khan, Mohsin Khan, and Shamar Joseph add depth to the pace attack.

With an overall 24-19 win-loss record (54.54%) across 44 matches over three seasons, LSG's journey has been a roller-coaster. To compete for higher honours this year, the team must take full advantage of the slow and low pitches at its home venue Ekana Stadium.



RAVI BISHNOI

■ If Pant chooses to open the innings and Markram moves to the middle-order, Pooran and Miller will provide the final push

IPL-18 COUNTDOWN

Lucknow Super Giants

THE DUGOUT

Rishabh Pant (Capt.), Ayush Badoni, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Nicholas Pooran, Mitchell Marsh, Aryan Juyal, Himmat Singh, Matthew Breetzke, Abdul Samad, Shahbaz Ahmed, Yuvraj Chaudhary, Rajvardhan Hangargekar, Arshin Kulkarni, Avesh Khan, Akash Deep, M. Siddharth, Digvesh Singh, Akash Singh, Shamar Joseph, Prince Yadav, Mayank Yadav, Mohsin Khan, Ravi Bishnoi.

THE DRIVING FORCE

RAVI BISHNOI: Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi will be a crucial weapon, especially with the Lucknow surface expected to favour spin. His wicket-taking ability, along with his outstanding fielding, will be pivotal for the outfit.

OVERALL NUMBERS

M	W	L	NR
44	24	19	1

PLAYOFFS 2022, 2023

BY OPPONENT

	M	W	L	NR
MI	6	5	1	0
CSK	5	3	1	1
DC	5	3	2	0
KKR	5	3	2	0
RCB	5	2	3	0
GT	5	1	4	0
RR	5	1	4	0
PBKS	4	3	1	0
SRH	4	3	1	0

LSG'S 2025 LEAGUE CAMPAIGN

March 24	vs DC	Visakhapatnam	7.30 p.m.
March 27	vs SRH	Hyderabad	7.30 p.m.
April 1	vs PBKS	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
April 4	vs MI	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
April 6	vs KKR	Kolkata	3.30 p.m.
April 12	vs GT	Lucknow	3.30 p.m.
April 14	vs CSK	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
April 19	vs RR	Jaipur	7.30 p.m.
April 22	vs DC	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
April 27	vs MI	Mumbai	3.30 p.m.
May 4	vs PBKS	Dharamshala	7.30 p.m.
May 9	vs RCB	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
May 14	vs GT	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
May 18	vs SRH	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.

Former World champion Villeneuve backs Norris to win title this year

FORMULA ONE

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Former Formula One World champion Jacques Villeneuve has backed Lando Norris for this year's driver's title.

The McLaren driver finished second behind Max Verstappen in the championship last year but was instrumental in his team winning the constructors' crown. Based on the times from pre-season testing, McLaren will likely be the fastest car heading into the season-opener in Australia this weekend.

"Definitely Lando. McLaren seems to have made a really strong car," said the 1997 driver's champion.

"If you just look at their season and how they progressed, they kept making steps forward. Lando was the only driver in the field that could step up to Max (Verstappen) and was on it every race. If he's still in the same mindset, the season should start strong. We will have to see how it pans out halfway through the season. But the favourite right now is Lando and McLaren."

Norris. AP

Last year, Norris and Verstappen came together a few times and Villeneuve believes the British racer did the right thing by standing up to the reigning champion. "He didn't budge. They ended up clashing in Austria and paid a hefty price, stronger than Max did, but ultimately, he showed Max that he wasn't going to move and was in there to fight. So, he already did the right thing."

One of the interesting plotlines of this season is Lewis Hamilton leaving Mercedes to join Ferrari and the 53-year-old backed the seven-time champion to raise his game.

"Lewis wants to be the driver with the most championships. And try to win with Ferrari. It is the dream of most drivers. Once you've won everything, you still need to win with Ferrari," said Villeneuve, whose father Giles drove for Ferrari and is widely considered one of the legends of F1.

"He goes into Ferrari knowing that it's (Charles) Leclerc's team, and he needs to become the team leader. So I think he will be brutal in that aspect. He knows how to win and how to move a team forward. It will be interesting, because Ferrari is not an easy team. There's a lot of pressure from the fans and the team. It's a very energetic place, but not an easy place to evolve, and Leclerc knows it (team) well."

"And for Ferrari, it's a win-win situation. If they win with Lewis, bingo, Amazing. If Leclerc beats Lewis, they create a star out of Leclerc. So right now, I guess they're just waiting to see what will happen but Lewis will not want to be beaten."

(FanCode is the official broadcaster for F1 in India)

Lakshya and Treesa-Gayatri move into the last eight

ALL ENGLAND

Press Trust of India
BIRMINGHAM

India's Lakshya Sen stunned world No. 2 Jonatan Christie of Indonesia in straight games in a superlative display to enter the men's singles quarterfinals of the All England Championships here on Thursday.

Lakshya just took 36 minutes to beat Christie 21-13, 21-10 in a one-sided contest.

Third seed Lakshya dominated Christie from the word go.

Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly also advanced to the women's doubles quarterfinals. They rallied to beat Korean duo Kong Hee Yong and Kim Hye Jeong 15-21, 21-18, 21-18.

In his element: Lakshya dominated Christie from the word go.
GETTY IMAGES

Seventh seed Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty conceded their pre-quarterfinal to Hao Nan Xie and Wei Han Zeng of China midway after Chirag's back injury flared up.

The results: Pre-quarterfinals:

Women: Akane Yamaguchi (Jpn) bt Malvika Bansod 21-16, 21-13.

Men: Lakshya Sen bt Jonatan Christie (Ina) 21-13, 21-10.

Women's doubles: Gayatri Gopichand & Treesa Jolly bt Kong Hee Yong & Kim Hye Jeong (Kor) 15-21, 21-18, 21-18.

Men's doubles: Wei Han Zeng & Hao Nan Xie (Chn) bt Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty 21-16, 2-2 (retd.).

Mixed doubles: Zhe Feng Yan & Xin Wei Ya (Chn) bt Rohan Kapoor & Ruthvika Shivani Gadde 21-10, 21-12.

Atletico fails to surmount Real yet again

The record 15-time champion prevails in a dramatic shoot-out and will now face Arsenal in the quarters; Aston Villa and Dortmund also advance

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
MADRID

Real Madrid won a dramatic penalty shoot-out against city rival Atletico to qualify for the Champions League quarterfinals on Wednesday, while Arsenal, Aston Villa and Borussia Dortmund also advanced to the last eight.

In the shoot-out Alvarez scored for Atletico but his effort was ruled out by VAR as he touched the ball twice because of a slip as he shot.

Marcos Llorente also missed for Atletico and Madrid's Antonio Rudiger struck the winner for the reigning champion, which will face Arsenal in the last eight. Much earlier, Conor Gallagher's strike just 27 seconds into the game had levelled the scores overall.

The Gunners' progress to a second straight quarterfinal was never in doubt going into the second leg of their last-16 tie against PSV Eindhoven, after a 7-1 win in the Netherlands last week.

The clubs drew 2-2 in the return at the Emirates Stadium, allowing Mikel Arteta's Arsenal to advance 9-3 on aggregate.

There are two Premier League clubs into the last eight, with Aston Villa beating Club Brugge 3-0 in Birmingham to secure a 6-1 aggregate triumph.

Last season's beaten finalist Borussia Dortmund fought back to beat Lille 2-1 in France and win tie 3-2 on aggregate.

Dortmund will now face Barcelona in the quarterfinals next month, having already lost 3-2 at home to the Catalans during the league phase in December.

Job done! Rudiger, second from left, celebrates with his mates after scoring the winning penalty. REUTERS

The results (Last 16, second leg; aet denotes after extra time): Lille 1 (David 5) lost to Borussia Dortmund 2 (Can 54-pen, Beier 65). *Borussia Dortmund wins 3-2 on aggregate.*

Arsenal 2 (Zinchenko 6, Rice 37) drew with PSV Eindhoven 2 (Perisic 18, Driouech 70). *Arsenal wins 9-3 on aggregate.*

Aston Villa 3 (Asensio 50, 61, Maatsen 57) bt Club Brugge 0. *Aston Villa wins 6-1 on aggregate.*

Atletico Madrid 1 (Gallagher 1) bt Real Madrid 0 *(aet 2-2 on aggregate; Real Madrid wins 4-2 on penalties).*

Quarterfinal line-up: Paris Saint-Germain vs, Aston Villa; Arsenal vs. Real Madrid; Barcelona vs. Borussia Dortmund; Bayern Munich vs. Inter Milan. *First legs to be played April 8/9; second legs on April 15/16.*

INBRIEF

Draper ousts Fritz while Bencic removes Gauff

Jack Draper of Britain ousted third-seeded American Taylor Fritz 7-5, 6-4 to reach the quarterfinals of the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells on Wednesday. On the women's side, No. 3 seed Coco Gauff was upset in the round of 16 by unseeded Belinda Bencic.

The results: Fourth round: Men: Ben Shelton bt Brandon Nakashima 7-6(6), 6-1; Jack Draper bt Taylor Fritz 7-5, 6-4; Francisco Cerundolo bt Alex De Minaur 7-5, 6-3; Carlos Alcaraz bt Grigor Dimitrov 6-1, 6-1.

Women: Aryna Sabalenka bt Sonay Kartal 6-1, 6-2; Liudmila Samsonova bt Jasmine Paolini 6-0, 6-4; Belinda Bencic bt Cori Gauff 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Madison Keys bt Donna Vekic 4-6, 7-6 (7), 6-3.

India drawn with Indonesia, Denmark and England

The Indian badminton team is grouped alongside Indonesia, Denmark and England in the Badminton World Federation Sudirman Cup Finals which will be held in Xiamen, China, from April 27 to May 4.

Ankita and Priska enter doubles semifinals

Ankita Raina and Priska Nugroho of Indonesia beat the top seeds Yiming Dang and Yidi Yang 7-6(3), 6-1 in the doubles quarterfinals of the $40,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Shenzhen, China, on Thursday.

Other results: $30,000 ITF women, Nonthaburi:
Pre-quarterfinals: Anchisa Chanta (Tha) bt Shrivalli Bhamidipaty 6-1, 6-3.
Doubles: Quarterfinals: Shrivalli & Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Daria Frayman (Cyp) & Sandugash Kenzhibayeva (Kaz) 6-2, 6-1.

LIVE TELECAST

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday)
Serie A: gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Saturday)
LaLiga: gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Bumrah needs to be looked after, says McGrath

CRICKET

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

Australian cricket legend Glenn McGrath on Thursday praised Jasprit Bumrah as an incredible and unique bowler, referring to Bumrah's exceptional performance in the latest Border Gavaskar Trophy. McGrath also acknowledged Bumrah's intelligent captaincy in the first Test of the series.

"I take keen interest in Jasprit and the way he goes. I think he's an incredible bowler. He's unique. And that Australia-India series showed how important he is," said McGrath.

"I know the scoreline was 3-1, but if he'd been fit to bowl in that second innings in the last Test (Sydney), you just never know. He was unplayable sometimes. He looked like he was going to get a wicket every over. He's easily one of the best in the world.

"That first Test in Perth, I think as a captain, I had a lot of respect for him. He's very intelligent. He thinks well. I thought he did a great job," said McGrath at the MRF Pace Foundation ground here.

McGrath mentioned the significant stress Bumrah puts on his body with his bowling style and emphasized the need for him to be carefully managed.

"He is a bowler you've got to manage. You've got to look after him. Because, the amount of stress he puts on his body every ball compared to the other bowlers is different.

McGrath. R. RAGU

"It's going to be interesting to see how Jasprit manages it and what he does, because of how he bowls and the type of bowler that he is.

"There's the hyperextension of his arm. When I saw him as a young bowler, he had a big jump out. I think he blew his knee out and when he came back, he had to go straight through the crease.

"He's just an incredible bowler. He found what worked for him. He's completely different to any other bowler out there. Most bowlers need a longer run-up to create that momentum. He finds a way to get it off the last two steps.

"But, unfortunately, he probably puts more stress on his body than the other bowlers. So, he's found ways to manage it. But not all the time, because he has developed injuries every now and then," he added.

Brook had opted out of the forthcoming edition to focus on his England career. REUTERS

BCCI bans Brook from IPL for two seasons

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

England batter Harry Brook has been banned from the Indian Premier League for two seasons following his last minute pullout from the 2025 edition.

Earlier this week, Brook had made himself unavailable for the second straight season and apologised "unreservedly" to his franchise Delhi Capitals and its supporters.

"There was a rule in place and that has been implemented. The ban covers the 2025 and 2026 editions," said a BCCI official.

Any foreign player who misses the IPL after getting picked at the auction faces a two-year ban from the IPL unless he is injured.

Brook opted out of the forthcoming edition to focus on his England career while in 2024, he withdrew following the death of his grandmother.

England will play India in a home Test series in June.

This season wasn't easy: Jemimah

Role model: Jemimah wants to imbibe the calm but aggressive quality that her skipper Lanning possesses. K. MURALI KUMAR

WPL

Vivek Krishnan
MUMBAI

As another Women's Premier League (WPL) season approaches its climax, another shot at winning the title awaits Delhi Capitals.

Meg Lanning & Co. haven't yet experienced the glee of hoisting the trophy, but by topping the table in each of the three seasons to claim a direct berth in the final, they have set a benchmark for consistency.

What has shaped this run of stability and success?

"I just think every player in this team is so professional and just knows what they're doing. Every player adds so much value to this team," DC vice-captain Jemimah Rodrigues said during a virtual media interaction on Thursday.

"And when everyone comes together, it just works as one unit. This year wasn't the easiest for us. But I think out of all the three seasons, I'm most proud of this year because we found a way to pick ourselves up and still be consistent and still be that DC team that everyone knows about."

As a result of finishing first at the end of the league stage, Capitals will be going into Saturday's final after an eight-day break without having played a game at the Brabourne Stadium. Asked whether the lack of game time in Mumbai could be a drawback, the 24-year-old was quick to disagree.

"The thing is that everyone in our team is pretty familiar with the conditions and pitches," she noted.

"We've been having good practice sessions on these off days. And honestly, after all the other pitches, Mumbai is like a batter's dream. You enjoy batting here. The outfield's fast. So, we are really looking forward to it and so are our bowlers."

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Its Chandan vs Ankit
S. Chandan of Karnataka will clash with Ankit Venkatraman of Tamil Nadu in the final of the ₹1 lakh CRS-AITA prize money men's tennis tournamen at the Tennis Advantage courts here. Chandan defeated Y. Hitesh 6-2, 6-1 in the semifinal. In the other last-four clash, Venkatraman took out Maanav Jain of Karnataka, 6-3, 6-4.

Delhi PS HC posts win
Delhi Public School HC defeated Besant Hockey Club 'A' 5-3 in the KSHA-BHA Super Division hockey league here.
The results: Delhi PS HC 5 (Karthik 4, 22, 23, Senthil Kumar 12, Teswin 46) bt Besant HC 'A' (Akhil 26, Yuvaraj 28, Tharun 30).

Easy for BTM FC
BTM FC whipped Vijayanagara FC 6-0 in the BDFA 'A' division football league here on Thursday.
The results: FC Deccan bt Income Tax FC 3-1; BTM FC bt Vijayanagara FC 6-0.

Vani on song again

Sports Bureau
GURUGRAM

Vani Kapoor won her third title on the trot to claim the winner's cheque of ₹2,00,000 in the sixth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour at the DLF Golf and Country Club on Thursday. Vani also jumped to the top of the Order of Merit.

We are in India for the long haul, says WPA

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

The lack of sufficient top-level international participation in India's maiden Para Athletics Grand Prix event was not a concern for the world body with officials confident of things getting better in the coming years.

World Para Athletics (WPA) Competitions Head Martin Chorley, while admitting it was a much smaller event both in scale and participation compared to other WPA competitions, insisted that the timing was as much a reason as uncertainty about the organisation.

"Considering that the contract was signed only last December, it's fantastic to organise and deliver the event to the levels expected and it gives me confidence moving forward for the World Championships in September," Chorley said on the sidelines of the final day's action at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Thursday.

"More importantly, it is a chance for many of the youngsters, both Indian and from overseas, to experience what international competition is all about, get used to bigger events and get guaranteed classification opportunities. At the same time, this is only the beginning.

"It's a multi-year contract for the entire paralympic cycle of four years, a pathway to bigger events, not a one-time thing where India will just host this and the World Championships and be done with major events," he explained.

Asked about the way forward in terms of improving the organisation, Chorley was optimistic. "The local organising committee has been very willing to make changes and address the issues in the run-up to the Worlds, take suggestions and improve," he added.

Meanwhile, Vanessa Low did not disappoint, the Australian taking top spot in the women's Long Jump (T38, T44, T61) category despite a below par 4.96m jump in the three-competitor event.

Among the men, Para Asian Games medallist Ravi Rongali finished third in the shot put (F40-41) category with a best throw of 9.89m, behind Russians Denis Gnezdilov (11.36m) and Aiaal Sivtsev (12.10m).

Veteran Ankur Dhama too finished third in an all-Indian race in the men's 5000m (T11-12) won by Sharath Shankarappa while Saurabh Sharma clinched silver.

Creditable show: Rongali finished third in the shot put (F40-41) category. PCI

Important results (Indians unless stated): Men: 5000m (T11-12): 1. Sharath Shankarappa (16:19.13), 2. Saurabh Sharma (16:58.08), 3. Ankur Dhama (18:58.08); **shot put (F35-37):** 1. Kudratillokhon Marufkhujaev (Uzb, 14.89m), 2. Alan Kokoity (NPA, 14.68m), 3. Albert Khinchagov (NPA, 12.46m); **shot put (F40-41):** 1. Denis Gnezdilov (NPA, 11.36m), 2. Aiaal Sivtsev (12.10m), 3. Ravi Rongali (9.89m).

Women: 200m (T35-38): 1. Rhiannon Clarke (Aus, 26.76s), 2. Margarita Goncharova (NPA, 27s), 3. Preeti Pal (31.50s); **long Jump (T38, T44, T61):** 1. Vanessa Low (Aus, 4.96m), 2. Zhana Fekolina (NPA, 4.13m), 3. Bhavani Munniyandi (3.51m).

Czar primed to deliver in the Madras Race Club Trophy

BENGALURU: Czar, who has been well tuned, is expected to score in the Madras Race Club Trophy (1,200m), the main event of the races to be held here on Friday (Mar. 14). False rails (width about 3.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 LINGANAMAKKI STAKES (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-30 p.m.: 1. Charismatic (1) Akshay K 56, 2. Sea Glory (3) Vinod Shinde 56, 3. Star Studded (8) Yash 56, 4. Unforgettable Star (4) M. Prabhakaran 56, 5. Celestial Flame (6) Darshan 54.5, 6. Ilia (5) Antony 54.5, 7. Nozomi (2) Likith Appu 54.5 and 8. Ziva (7) Trevor 54.5.
1. CHARISMATIC, 2. ZIVA, 3. ILIA

2 MANIKYADHARA FALLS PLATE (1,600m), rated 20 to 45, 3-00: 1. Thewhisperquietly (3) L.A. Rozario 62.5, 2. Bruce Almightly (4) Antony 60, 3. Imperial Star (5) Neeraj 59.5, 4. Equalizer (1) Salman Khan 55, 5. Vafadar (6) Trevor 55, 6. Stentorian (2) Yash 54.5, 7. Star Of India (8) Vinod Shinde 53.5 and 8. N R I Victory (7) Jagadeesh 53.
1. VAFADAR, 2. STENTORIAN, 3. THEWHISPERQUIETLY

3 SARB-KLA PLATE (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 3-30: 1. Aatherv (1) Akshay K 56, 2. Edmonton (6) B. Harish 56, 3. Flaming Sword (3) Trevor 56, 4. Fortis (4) Shreyas S 56, 5. Konkaraah (8) Antony 56, 6. Night Raider (9) L.A. Rozario 56, 7. Husanara (10) Yash 54.5, 8. Laamika (11) Darshan 54.5, 9. Mystic Charm (2) P. Mani 54.5, 10. Petite Image (7) Koshi K 54.5 and 11. Whitney (5) Likith Appu 54.5.
1. FLAMING SWORD, 2. HUSANARA, 3. KONKARAAH

4 SIR CHARLES TODHUNTER MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), rated 40 to 65, 5-y-o & over, 4-00: 1. Southern Force (2) Akshay K 60, 2. Invincible (3) Neeraj 58.5, 3. High Speed Dive (9) R. Pradeep 57, 4. Amazing Attraction (4) Salman Khan 56, 5. Klimt (5) M. Prabhakaran 55, 6. Springsteen (6) Trevor 55, 7. Augusto (8) Pavan 54.5, 8. Solo Prince (1) Jagadeesh 53 and 9. Adamas (7) Shrikant Kamble 51.5.
1. INVINCIBLE, 2. HIGH SPEED DIVE, 3. SPRINGSTEEN

5 MADRAS RACE CLUB TROPHY (1,200m), rated 80 & above, 4-30: 1. Santorino (4) Pavan 62.5, 2. Czar (7) Aleemuddin 61.5, 3. Aldgate (3) Antony 58.5, 4. Star Glory (2) Yash 58, 5. Vivaldo (6) Trevor 56, 6. Dun It Again (5) Koshi K 51.5, 7. Metzinger (1) Neeraj 50 and 8. Vijaya Falcon (8) S. Shareef 50.
1. CZAR, 2. STAR GLORY, 3. VIVALDO

6 BRAHMAPUTRA PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 5-00: 1. Honourable Lady (2) Darshan 61.5, 2. Monterio (3) Vivek 60, 3. Basilica (8) Trevor 59.5, 4. Verrazzano (7) Yash 57, 5. Lords Grace (10) N.S. Parmar 56.5, 6. Mehra (6) G. Praveen 54.5, 7. Victoriaraya (11) Akshay K 54, 8. Winfield (5) Antony 54, 9. Posthaste (1) Koshi K 53.5, 10. N R I Gold (9) Rayan 53 and 11. N R I Jetpower (4) Salman Khan 53.
1. VICTORIARAYA, 2. WINFIELD, 3. LORDS GRACE

7 SOUPARNIKA PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 6-y-o & over, 5-30: 1. Agera (4) Akshay K 60, 2. Altamonte (3) Salman Khan 59, 3. Dufy (1) Neeraj 59, 4. Mega Success (7) Jagadeesh 58.5, 5. Super Kind (5) R. Pradeep 57.5, 6. Silver Swift (12) Antony 56, 7. Sling Shot (2) Likith Appu 56, 8. Emeraldo (9) B. Harish 55.5, 9. Princess Jasmine (10) Suhas K 54, 10. Benzema (11) Vinod Shinde 51.5, 11. Ice Storm (6) M. Rajesh K 51 and 12. Chiraag (8) Shreyas S 50.5.
1. DUFY, 2. AGERA, 3. SUPER KIND

Day's best: **CHARISMATIC**

Double: **FLAMING SWORD – VICTORIARAYA**

Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.